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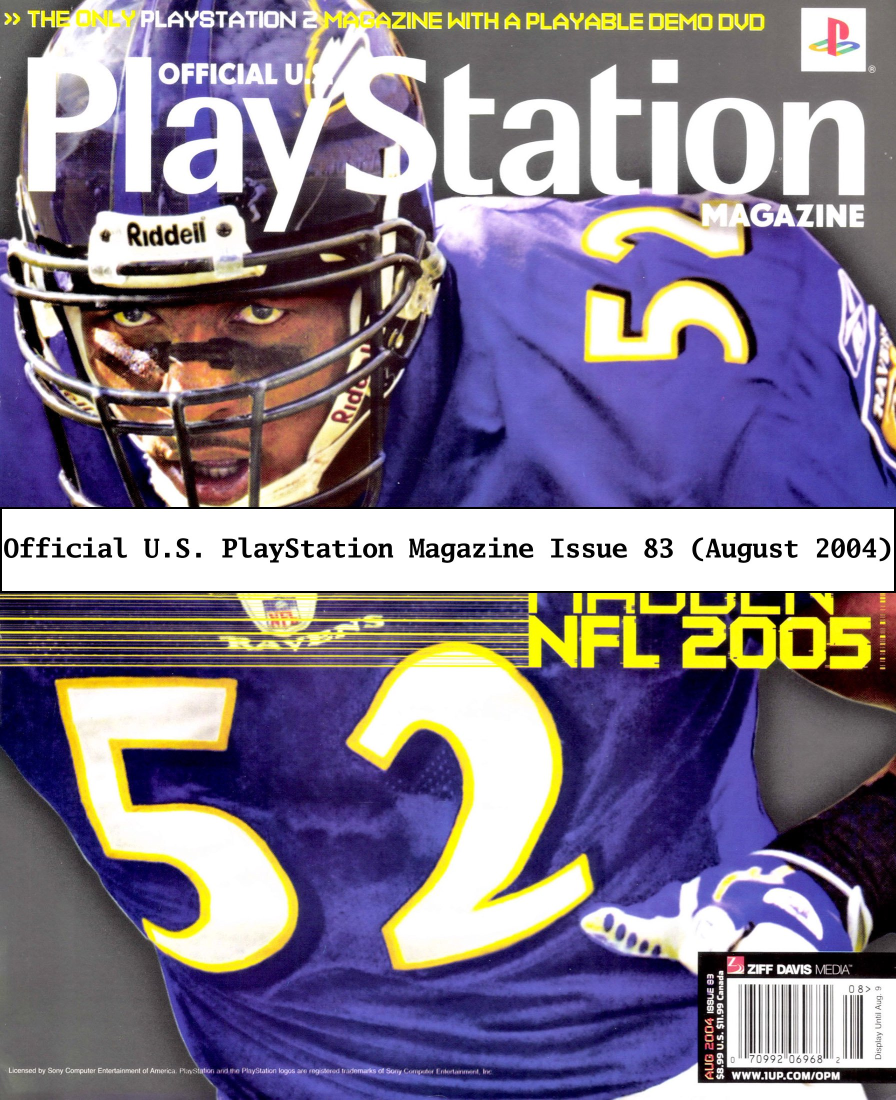

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine Issue 83 (August 2004)

NFL 2005

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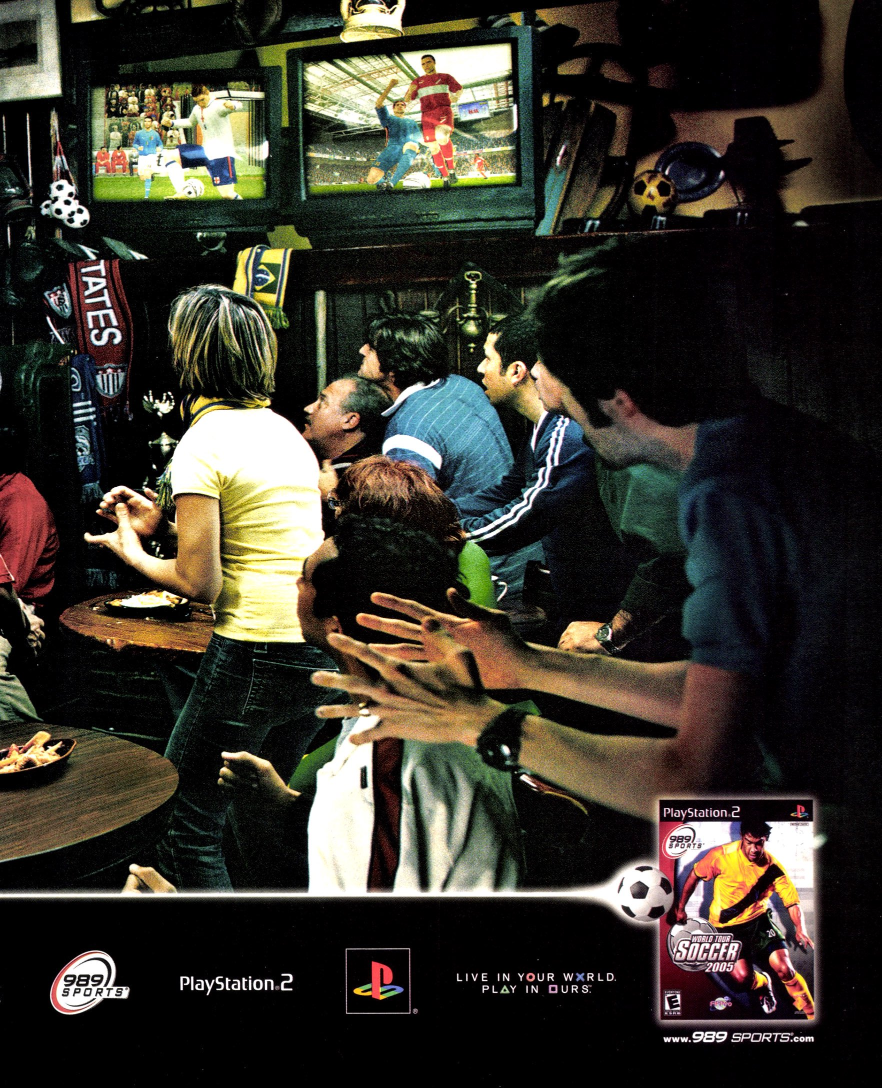
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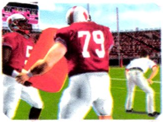

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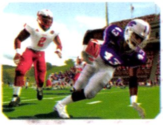

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★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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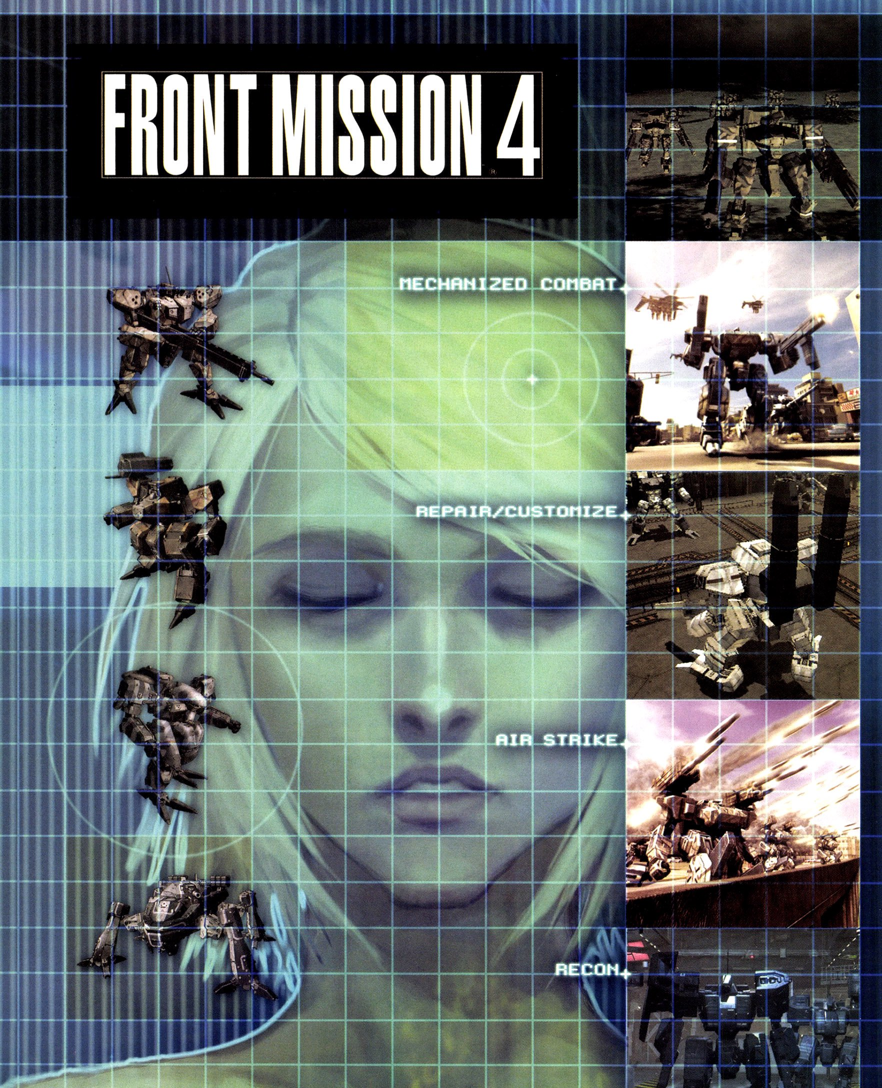
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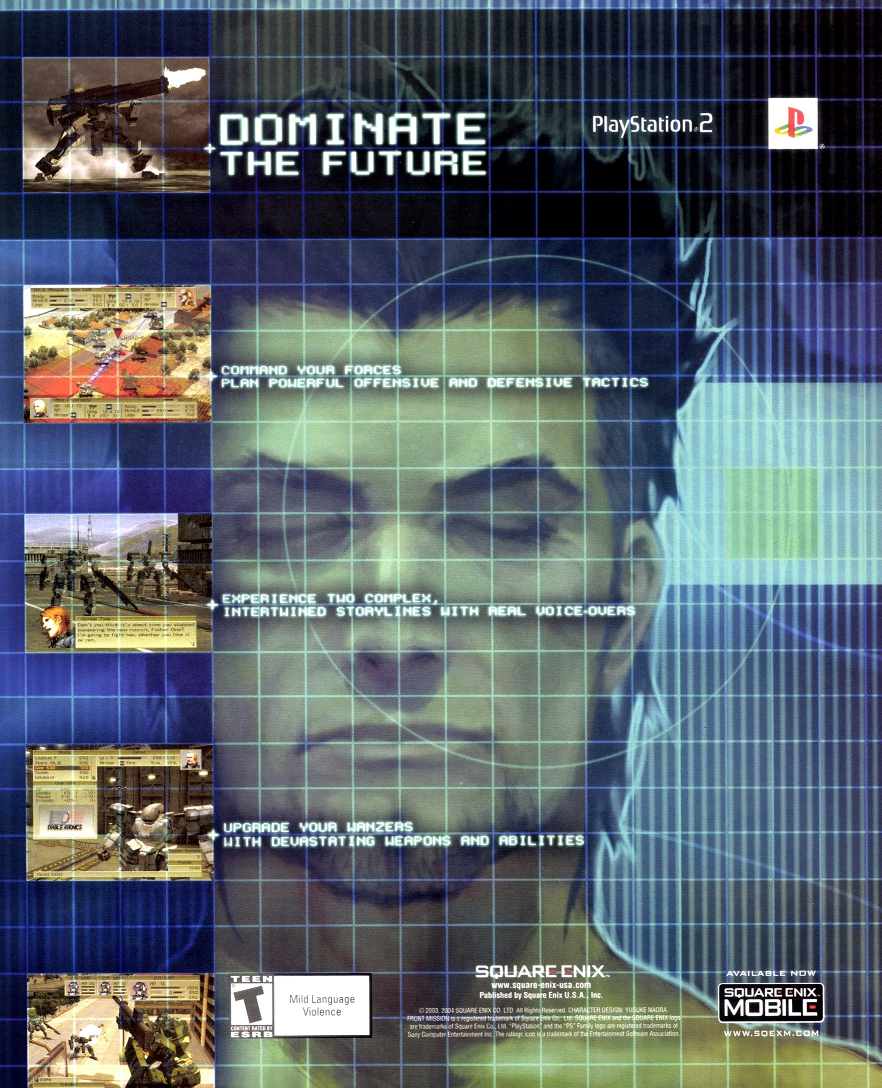
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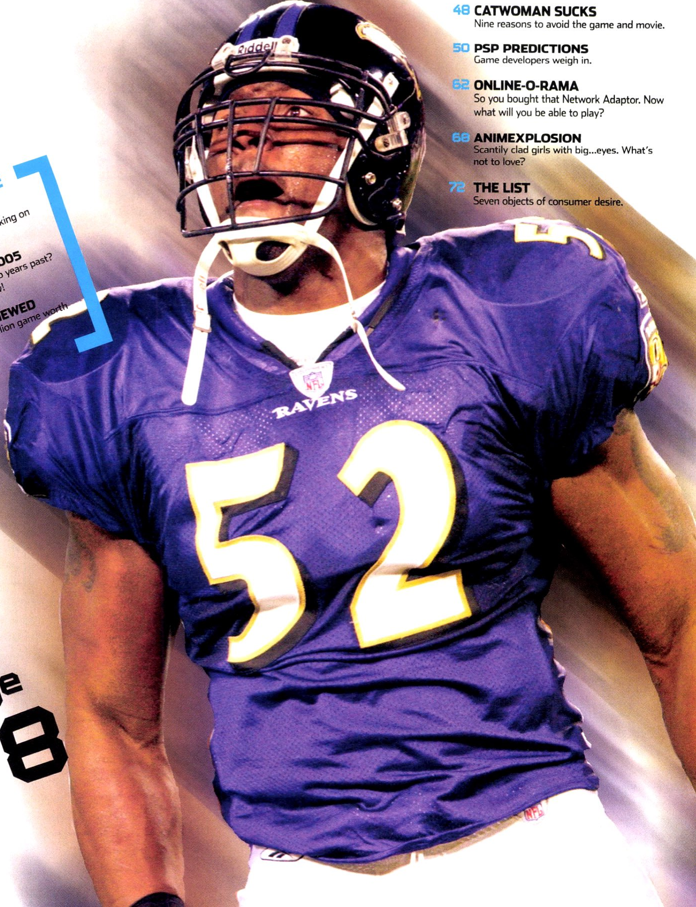

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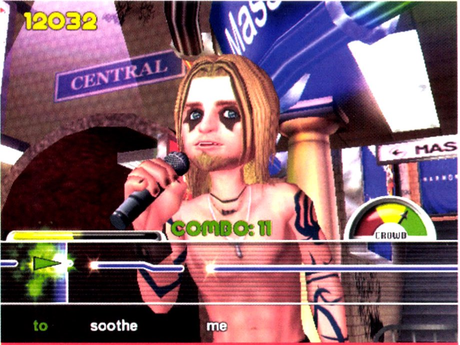


KARAOKE REVOLUTION VOLUME 2

SING YOUR HEART OUT

If I could have changed one thing about the first *Karaoke Revolution*, it would have been the difficulty. The game just seemed a tad too easy for anyone of even modest singing ability and a passing familiarity with the featured songs. That being the case, *Karaoke Revolution Volume 2* is a pleasant surprise.

It's not an enormous jump in difficulty this time around, to be sure. But the inclusion of some more challenging songs and the addition of an expert level make it noticeably tougher for anyone aching to put on a USB headset and have their pitch and rhythm judged.

Songs like "Let's Get It On," "Virtual Insanity," and the Darkness' spectacularly awesome yodelfest "I Believe in a Thing Called Love" make it necessary to actually *practice* the songs beforehand—even if you think you know them quite well.

But there's more to it than more difficult songs. This particular selection of tracks is *much* more varied than those in the first *Karaoke*, meaning you're a lot less likely to be thrown many softballs as you work your way through the showtime mode. Don't like country? Too bad: The fourth stage features nothing but. Don't want to feel silly singing? Don't expect to win, then: The final stage is comprised of "Let's Get It On," "Lady Marmalade," "Toxic," and "Rock and Roll All Nite." Yes, the Kiss song. Deal with it. Besides, that's really half the fun of Konami's Bemani series—you need to learn songs you wouldn't normally touch if you want to do well.

The additions of a medley mode—two to five song clips in quick succession—and a one-song quick-play option are solid improvements as well. I'm also pleased to see that Harmonix increased the number of unlockable goodies: As you do better and better, you'll unlock new characters, new outfits, new songs, and even a few cheats. That makes for a much stronger motivation to keep polishing your chops. Well, that, and the simple thrill of being able to sing some of these tough numbers. It's another must-have for singers. « *Joe Rybicki*

4863
I be- lieve in a thing

8460
dream at night I can on- ly

PlayStation RATING

HIGH NOTES More challenging, more reasons to do better
SOUR NOTES The wide variety of music styles means there will be plenty you hate

Pub. Konami **Dev.** Harmonix **ESRB** Everyone **MSRP** $39.99

[●●●●◐]

NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH...

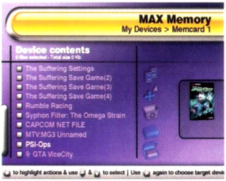
Maximum Overdrive. What happens when Stephen King not only writes a horror movie, but also directs it? Absolute crap, as proven by this 1986 turkey in which Emilio Estevez leads a not-so-star-studded cast in a fight for survival. The antagonist? Deadly machinery with a murderous mind of its own brought to life by the powers of a passing comet.

GO PRO

Yeah, singing into a headset can make you feel a little more like Britney Spears and a little less like, well, anyone good. So head out to your local game store and plop down $20 for Logitech's USB microphone. You and your audience will be glad you did.

MAX DRIVE

GET YOUR CHEAT ON



MAX Memory
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Device contents
0 files selected - Total size 0 Kb

- The Suffering Settings
- The Suffering Save Game(2)
- The Suffering Save Game(3)
- The Suffering Save Game(4)
- Rumble Racing
- Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain
- CAPCOM NET FILE
- MTV:MG3 Unnamed
- PSI-Ops
- GTA ViceCity

to highlight actions & use & to select | Use again to choose target devi

USB flash drives are all the rage these days. These little devices are the new floppy disk, a means of easily transporting modest amounts of data between different sources. So it was only a matter of time before someone figured out a way to use a flash drive with a PS2.

Enter Max Drive, one of the simplest and quickest ways I've seen of transferring data between a PS2 and a PC. With a capacity of 16MB, it has enough storage space to hold two whole memory cards' worth of game saves.

But that's just the beginning, because the portability of the flash drive means that you can then take those game saves over to your PC and archive them there. Not only that, you can also download game saves off the Internet to the Max Drive and transfer them to your memory card for the ultimate in lazy-ass cheating. **You can even upload your own game saves to share with others** through Datel's Code Junkies site—including your own EyeToy videos (which are really just big game saves anyway).

Now, this isn't quite as simple as it sounds; in order for your PS2 to recognize the Max Drive, you need to load the included software—every time. This becomes a little bit of a pain if you plan to do a lot of transferring back and forth, especially since the Max Drive seemed to enjoy deactivating my controller, requiring the occasional hard reset. (This is the risk you run with peripherals that aren't officially licensed for use on PS2.)

The other problem I ran into is that the saves you find online vary in their usefulness: Some are of the "everything unlocked" variety, while others include merely "lots of extras." Some don't even seem to work at all (the *Vice City* save being the most notable perpetrator). And **the selection of official saves is a little hit or miss:** *Vice City* but not *GTA3*? *MTX: Mototrax* but not *MX Unleashed*? Not a *Gran Turismo* save in sight?

Nevertheless, as far as I'm concerned, the archival ability of this slick little device—handily eliminating the need to buy any additional memory cards, ever—makes it more than worth the fairly modest price. « *Joe Rybicki*

PlayStation RATING

PROS Store and share saves (and EyeToy movies!) on your PC or on the Internet
CONS Downloaded saves don't always work
CAVEAT This is a totally unlicensed device, so be prepared for it to behave a bit unreliably

Manufacturer: Datel **MSRP** $29.99

[●●●◐○]

by John Scalzi

HELLBOY

Hellboy provides geeks of all sorts triple satisfaction. For the comic book geeks, it's the satisfaction of knowing that their beloved Hellboy—a gentle hellspawn who saves the world in no-nonsense style—has gotten to the screen just right. It hasn't been dumbed down or made safe by Hollywood morons. For drama geeks, it's the satisfaction of seeing Ron Perlman—a totally reliable character actor with a history of odd film choices—getting his due with a lead role that suits his style. And for the film geeks, it's the satisfaction of seeing director Guillermo del Toro get his due.

Personally, it's the last one that I think is the key. Del Toro is a master stylist who rocked Mexican cinema with *Cronos* (one of the better horror films you'll see). He then did his time in America with *Mimic* (which was interesting but flawed due to studio meddling) and *Blade II* (which was rather better than the first film, but del Toro was ultimately a hired gun on it). *Hellboy* is the first time in the United States he's gotten free reign, and he takes full advantage. If you don't love the look of this film, there's bad wiring in your eyeballs.

But del Toro isn't just about style: The script treads lightly and with humor, and especially makes Hellboy as normal a guy as a red, 7-foot demon with horns can be. He even likes a girl (Selma Blair) who literally gets hot when she's excited. Perlman is perfectly cast. He's a smart enough actor with a smart enough part to make you get over all that makeup.

Everyone arrives with this one: Perlman, Hellboy, and especially del Toro. It's been a long time coming in each case, and worth the wait.

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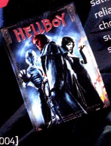

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT

(Ashton Kutcher, Amy Smart)

Ashton Kutcher plays a time-tripping character punk'd by causality—i.e., just because you *can* go back in time doesn't mean you *should*. Not a particularly memorable film, but it's Kutcher's first chance to prove he can play something other than stoned or dumb, and you know what? He's OK. It appears he can handle actual acting in short bursts. And there's a certain satisfaction in watching his character try to change the past, only to get clobbered in the present. Any guy who gets to be rich and famous and date Demi Moore deserves a karmic beat-down, even if it's only cinematic.

●●●○○

STARSKY & HUTCH

(Ben Stiller, Owen Wilson)

Snoop Dogg as Huggy Bear! Does this film need any other rationalization for its existence? Not as far as we're concerned—although the now-established comedy team of Ben Stiller and Owen Wilson (as the tense Starsky and the laid-back Hutch, respectively) is an additional side benefit. And you can never go wrong roundly mocking one of the more pointless cop shows of the 1970s. Trouble is, if you never saw the show (or, say, don't remember much that happened in the '70s), you're not going to get very many of the references and in-jokes—it's likely to come off as mildly entertaining at best. Nevertheless, it's funny, it's fast, and if you remember much of anything about it 15 minutes after seeing it, you need to start filling your head with more memorable things.

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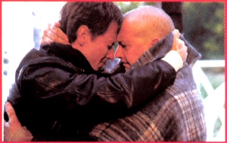

THE BARBARIAN INVASIONS

(Rémy Girard, Stéphane Rousseau)

This film won this year's Oscar for best foreign language film. I know, I know, try to contain your excitement, why don't you? The main character spends his last days reuniting with the people who meant something in his life and trying to come to terms with them all; these reconnections are sometimes spiky but always important. In the end, the film is an observation on the art of dying well, which is of course harder than it looks. It all sounds depressing, but the reason it won that Oscar is because it's not. Yes, someone dies, but the dying isn't as important as the living that comes before it.

●●●●●

THE WHOLE TEN YARDS

(Bruce Willis, Matthew Perry)

What idiot thought *The Whole Nine Yards* needed a sequel? Nevertheless, here it is: Oz the dentist (Matthew Perry) and Jimmy the Tulip (Bruce Willis) are being hunted by a crime boss because they offed his son in the first film—the kicker being that the crime boss is played by Kevin Pollak, who played the previously offed son. While the film does offer us the opportunity to ogle both Amanda Peet and Natasha Henstridge, its most important function is to remind us that Perry's most important gig after *Friends* is the one in which he invests his sitcom money well.

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DVD RELEASES

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The Butterfly Effect
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Six Feet Under: Season 2
Star Trek Voyager: Season 3

July 13, 2004

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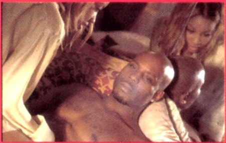
Aqua Teen Hunger Force: Vol. 2
The Barbarian Invasions
Never Die Alone
Slapstick
Starsky & Hutch: Season 1

July 20, 2004

All in the Family: Season 3
The Human Stain
Millennium: Season 1
Starsky & Hutch

July 27, 2004

Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex
Hellboy
Sledge Hammer! Season 1
V: The Complete Series
The Whole Ten Yards



NEVER DIE ALONE

(DMX)

This film taught DMX an important lesson, namely that people come to see a DMX film because of Steven Seagal and Jet Li. Which is too bad for them because *Die* is easily DMX's best movie. He plays a drug pusher who recounts a life that is brutal, hard, and tragic in its pointless waste of humanity. DMX doesn't soften it up—he is a true gangster in true gangsta style, and he gets what he deserves. Based on a novel by true-life former con Donald Goines, this film wants you to look hard at what this kind of life gets you. So take a look.

●●●●○

AQUA TEEN
HUNGER
FORCE

AQUA TEEN HUNGER FORCE VOL. 2

(Dave Willis, Carey Means)

The continuing "adventures" of Frylock, Meatwad, and Master Shake, as they don't do much of anything out there in Jersey. Yes, it's funny, but...I don't know. I guess I'm kind of an old-school Adult Swim guy. Give me *Space Ghost Coast to Coast* and maybe *The Brak Show*. But the kids love their Meatwad. What can you do? This month, *Sealab 2021* is also coming out on DVD, but the less said about that putrescence the better. More Brak! More Brak now!

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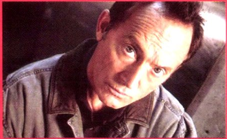

MILLENNIUM: THE COMPLETE FIRST SEASON

(Lance Henriksen)

Back in the day, when it was fun to think about the end of the world and shadowy conspiracies and all that crap, Chris Carter made this "companion" series to *The X-Files*, in which a former FBI agent with psychic abilities tracks down serial killers. It eventually got lame, but this first season is spooky as hell, and Lance Henriksen is perfectly cast as the former agent with a gentle soul and a head full of other people's sins. Worth another look, even if the paranoia seems quaint today.

●●●◐○

THE HUMAN STAIN

(Anthony Hopkins, Nicole Kidman)

I don't care if it is based on a Philip Roth novel—fact is, a movie called *The Human Stain* sounds like a particularly unappetizing Farrelly brothers flick, not a movie about serious examinations of race and class. Anthony Hopkins plays a professor with a racial secret who crosses class lines to date a frumpy janitor (Nicole Kidman, and yeah, that one's hard to buy). It's a fine movie, well acted and well directed, but also a failure at the box office. I imagine that's because serious adults just couldn't bring themselves to utter the title.

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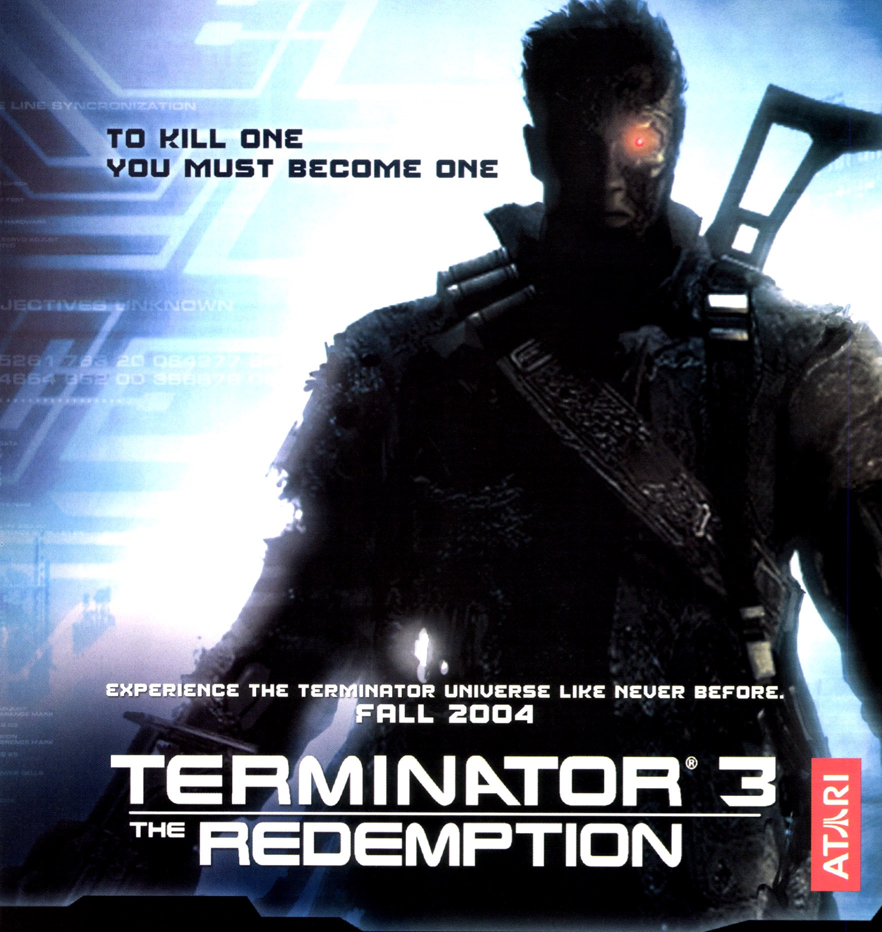
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REPLAY

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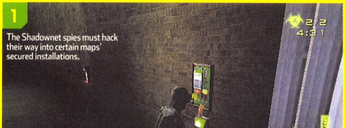
PARTNERSHIP WITH PRIMA

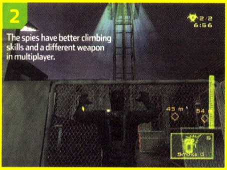
Prima Games, leading publisher of gaming guides, provides OPM with top-of-the-line strategies every month. In this issue, they shared their expertise on Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow, Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain, Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy, and Front Mission 4.

SPLINTER CELL PANDORA TOMORROW

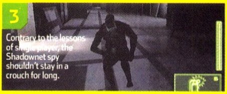
IT'S SPIES VERSUS MERCENARIES ONLINE—LEARN HOW TO DOMINATE EITHER SIDE



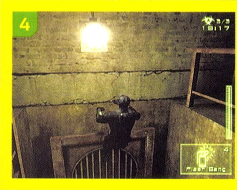
1 The Shadownet spies must hack their way into certain maps' secured installations.



2 The spies have better climbing skills and a different weapon in multiplayer.



3 Contrary to the lessons of single-player, the Shadownet spy shouldn't stay in a crouch for long.



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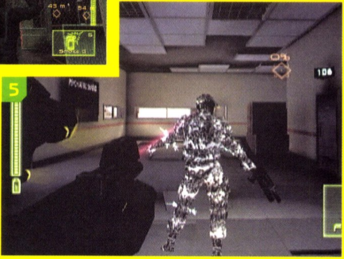

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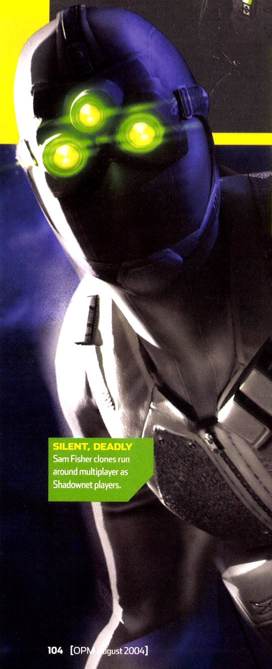


SILENT, DEADLY
Sam Fisher clones run around multiplayer as Shadownet players.

Ever play a good game of hide-and-seek? We don't mean the kiddie game that had you hiding under a pile of pillows when you were five. We mean a game in which one team coordinates an elaborate plan to steal highly dangerous research material and the other hunts trespassers with deadly bullets—a game in which you fear for your life when turning the next dark corner. No? Well, now you can, thanks to *Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow*'s online multiplayer option. Battle it out as spies or mercenaries against your friends.

SHADOWNET

1, 2, 3 Even though the Shadownet spies look like Sam Fisher, they don't have the same moves or equipment. Whereas Sam runs around everywhere in a crouch, the Shadownet player can't. If you run in a crouch as a Shadownet spy, you move much more slowly than when running upright. You'll also find your main weapon is changed, and you'll have less equipment available to you (though you get some new items, too).

4 DOUBLE-TAP JUMP

When running toward a wall, double-tap jump at the moment of impact to dash up the wall, *Shinobi* style. Use this to reach high ledges or jump back into a flip to elude a pursuing mercenary. Hit the brakes, and he'll fly right by.

5 HEAD SHOTS ARE GOOD

Aim for a head shot with your shock rifle, and you can short out a merc's helmet to disable his HUD. Your opponent won't be able to check his health or radar, let alone capture points or alarms. You'll have more than enough time to bust through an alarm before that merc is back online.

6 TAKE THEM FROM BEHIND

Like Sam Fisher, as a spy, you can sneak up and grab enemies. It works the same way as in single-player mode, and when you grab a mercenary, you can perform one of two separate actions. One, break your opponent's neck. Two, knock your victim out with an elbow. The victim will be downed only for a few seconds.

7 MIND IF WE SMOKE?

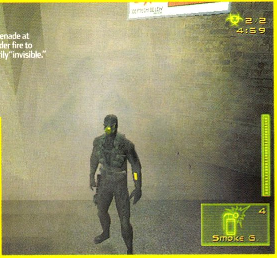
In the grenade department, you can carry smoke, flashbang, and chaff varieties. Against the enemy, smoke works the best. The mercenary may charge into the smoke after you, but prolonged exposure will knock him out. Slip through while he's blinded. Hotkey smoke and chaff grenades to work off the trigger buttons.

8 SHORT IN THE SHADOWS

Remember the good old days as Sam Fisher, when you could hide in darkness and watch the

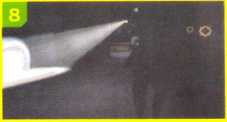
6

7



Throw a smoke grenade at your feet while under fire to become temporarily "invisible."

8



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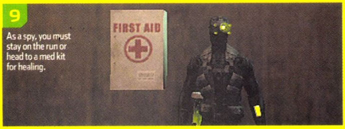
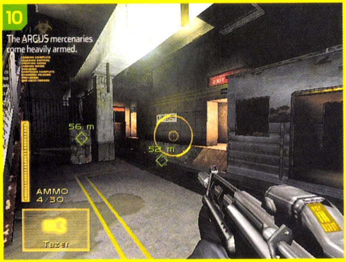


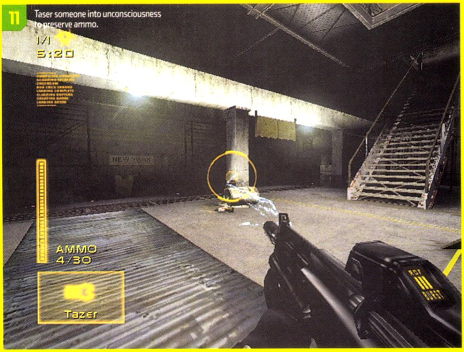
As a spy, you must stay on the run or head to a med kit for healing.

10



The ARGUS mercenaries come heavily armed.

11



Taser someone into unconsciousness to preserve ammo.

12

13

14

bad guy walk right up to you, a nose hair from sounding the alarm, and then shrug his shoulders like he must have been imagining the whole thing? Throw it out the window: Invisibility won't get you nearly as far in multiplayer. The Shadownet players can still use shadows and hiding spots to their advantage, but remember that you're dealing with human opponents now, as well as many more enemies in one spot than you'd find in single-player action. Most of the time you hide in shadows, it will be only for a few moments as you travel from location to location. The mercenaries have flashlights on their helmets, motion tracking/EMF vision (electromagnetic field vision), and heavy surveillance already set up on the various maps to track down infiltrating spies. Don't rely on the darkness to save your skin.

9 MOVE YOUR ASS!

Unlike in the single-player game, in which you assassinate your fair share of enemies at range with your sniper mode, multiplayer doesn't give you that luxury. It's a much faster-paced, all-out-action environment that doesn't reward you for standing still (unless, maybe, you're a Shadownet player holding an ND133 and escaping detection). Plus, there's a time limit on each game. As a spy, you must stay on the run to avoid being tagged with fire, and as a mercenary, staking out one location to kill someone in sniper mode will penalize your team when the ND133s all go bye-bye. If you're dead set on remaining a sniper, choose to join the mercenaries.

ARGUS

10 The ARGUS (Armed Guardian Services) corporation was set up to protect valuable holdings from international theft. Named after the 100-eyed giant guarding the Golden Fleece in *Jason and the Argonauts*, this private military organization specializes in contravention and security consultation. They wield the heavy firepower in multiplayer and can rack up kill totals fast. When you play as an ARGUS mercenary, your whole interface looks nothing like Sam Fisher's. You'll find almost every aspect of the mercenary alien to single player, so practice often before attempting a massive online battle.

11 TASER WHEN YOU CAN

Be a little bullet conscious, since you can carry only five clips with 30 bullets each. This is plenty for normal matches, but you could run low in longer battles, especially if you like to hold down the trigger on full auto. To preserve ammo switch to your taser to shock your opponent and incapacitate him. Obviously, this is also useful if you've used up all of those bullets already.

Krauser Lab

ADVANCED TACTICS

Once you've mastered the fundamentals of playing as both spies and mercenaries, the next step is learning what to do in specific game situations. Starting next month, we'll bring you a few multiplayer maps each issue, with map-specific hints and strategies. So come on back!

12 MOTION TRACKING IS AWESOME

Toggle on motion tracking, which highlights anyone moving, or EMF vision, which gives electronic equipment a bright glow when it's in use. A special mercenary ability, pupil adaptation, simulates a person's natural ability to gradually see better in the dark. If you remain motionless or move very slowly through a dark room, the ambient light will gradually increase. Eventually, you'll be able to discern shapes, as well as that spy in the corner who thinks he's pulling a fast one on you. Use motion tracking during close-range combat. This will help you follow the spy and make sure he doesn't get behind you. Also, the crafty ol' spy's flashbangs have no effect on you when you are using an enhanced vision mode. When you get a lock on the spy, taser him. Down goes the man.

13 BROADCAST SPY TRAPS

Place a spy trap to detect any spy who breaks the beam of the emitter. Your team will be able to keep tabs on his position and listen in on both spies' communication.

14 LASER MINES WORK WELL

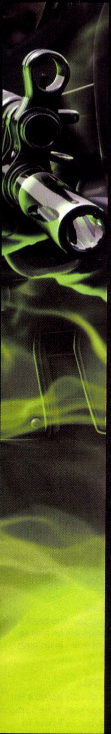
Use laser mines at eye level directly above a terminal. When a Shadownet spy sees it, he'll crouch to sneak up on the terminal, but he'll have to stand to deactivate it. Head go boom. «

SYPHON FILTER

THE OMEGA STRAIN

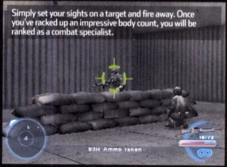
THE QUICK AND DIRTY ROUTE TO UNLOCKING EVERYTHING

RATINGS
Ratings are awarded for accomplishing certain combat-related goals throughout your service to the Agency. As your total number of accomplishments rises, so does your rating.



COMBAT SPECIALIST

Becoming a combat specialist is as easy as shooting everything that moves. The higher the body count you leave in your wake, the higher the rating you are awarded. Keep those guns blazing and you will find yourself an elite combat specialist in no time flat.



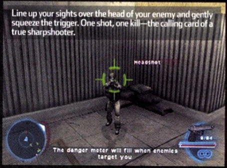
Simply set your sights on a target and fire away. Once you've racked up an impressive body count, you will be ranked as a combat specialist.

93R Ammo taken

RATING	ACCOMPLISHMENT	WEAPON AWARDED
Intermediate	300 kills	G 33E
Advanced	600 kills	FA-MAS
Expert	900 kills	FAL
Elite	1,300 kills	C8 Rifle

COMBAT SHARPSHOOTER

Anyone can become a proficient killer, but accomplishing the rank of combat sharpshooter is going to take a little more panache. Head shots are the only way you are going to jump the ranks in this exclusive club.



Line up your sights over the head of your enemy and gently squeeze the trigger. One shot, one kill—the calling card of a true sharpshooter.

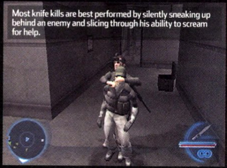
Headshot

The danger meter will fill when enemies target you

RATING	ACCOMPLISHMENT	WEAPON AWARDED
Intermediate	200 head shots	Dragunov
Advanced	450 head shots	AU300 Mod-R
Expert	750 head shots	ACR
Elite	1,100 head shots	m82 BFG

COMBAT KNIFE SPECIALIST

Impressing the Agency enough to obtain a rating of combat knife specialist is not going to be easy. In order to get a rating in this class, you will need to walk with light steps and carry a big knife. Gutting an enemy is easiest to do when he doesn't know you're near.

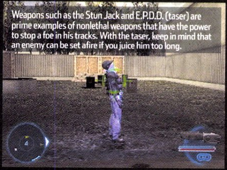


Most knife kills are best performed by silently sneaking up behind an enemy and slicing through his ability to scream for help.

RATING	ACCOMPLISHMENT	WEAPON AWARDED
Intermediate	50 knife kills	Stiletto
Advanced	100 knife kills	Shuriken
Expert	250 knife kills	IPCA Commando
Elite	450 knife kills	Vibro Blade

NONLETHAL FORCE SPECIALIST

A nonlethal force specialist is going to be someone who specializes in incapacitating an enemy or target. While this is not as deadly and violent as other methods, nonlethal tactics are often necessary to the success of a mission.

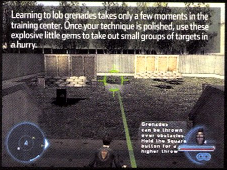


Weapons such as the Stun Jack and E.P.D.D. (taser) are prime examples of nonlethal weapons that have the power to stop a foe in his tracks. With the taser, keep in mind that an enemy can be set afire if you juice him too long.

RATING	ACCOMPLISHMENT	WEAPON AWARDED
Intermediate	50 nonlethal	E.D.T.
Advanced	100 nonlethal	DormaGen Gas Grenades
Expert	200 nonlethal	Air Pistol
Elite	300 nonlethal	E.P.D.D.

TACTICAL EXPLOSIVES SPECIALIST

Some people enjoy launching grenades into a crowd and watching everyone hit the ground in a fiery blast. These people are not necessarily sick and twisted, but rather may be tactical explosives specialists. Blast the body count high enough, and you'll quickly explode through the ratings.



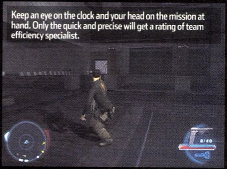
Learning to lob grenades takes only a few moments in the training center. Once your technique is polished, use these explosive little gems to take out small groups of targets in a hurry.

Grenades can be thrown over obstacles. Hold the Square button for a higher throw

RATING	ACCOMPLISHMENT	WEAPON AWARDED
Intermediate	100 grenade kills	M61 Frag Grenade
Advanced	200 grenade kills	Incendiary Grenade
Expert	350 grenade kills	Sarin Nerve Agent
Elite	500 grenade kills	M79

TEAM EFFICIENCY SPECIALIST

Choose your partner carefully because only a team that works well together will be able to reach a mission's time requirement. Achieving these time goals will give you a rating in the Team Efficiency field.



Keep an eye on the clock and your head on the mission at hand. Only the quick and precise will get a rating of team efficiency specialist.

RATING	ACCOMPLISHMENT	WEAPON AWARDED
Intermediate	2 par times (multiplayer)	M1 Super 90
Advanced	4 par times (multiplayer)	AU300 Mod-R
Expert	6 par times (multiplayer)	ACR
Elite	9 par times (multiplayer)	m82 BFG

SPECIAL RATINGS

Special ratings do not come easy. In order to tag one of these fancy ratings onto your title, you will need to complete a handful of achievements throughout the course of several levels.

RATING	ACHIEVEMENTS	AWARDED
Bio-Data Retrieval Expert	Carthage 1: Collect five water samples. Carthage 1: Perform field autopsy. Belarus 1: Take tissue sample from cow carcass. Belarus 2: Obtain sewage sample. Minsk: Deploy viral sniffers at marked locations. Chechnya (bonus mission): Collect tissue sample from a villager's body.	Increased Flak Jacket
Computer Information Expert	Carthage 1: Retrieve Broussard's laptop (team). Minsk: Download MetaGlobal's records. Tokyo: Upload computer data. Zurich: Access the mainframe computer. Ukraine: Find Omega Strain DNA code.	UNP 45
Elite Discrete Personnel Elimination Expert	Yemen 1: Eliminate Yushchenko. Kyrgyzstan (bonus mission): Poison Saydahmat's water chalice. Tokyo: Eliminate HNT leader Matsua. Myanmar: Eliminate Than Muang.	Head Shot Lock
Stealth Operations Expert	Italy (bonus mission): Maintain stealth. Kyrgyzstan (bonus mission): Maintain stealth. Yemen 1: Maintain stealth. Minsk: Maintain stealth. Chechnya (bonus mission): Maintain stealth. Lorelei: Maintain stealth until meeting Mujari. Tokyo: Breach security without triggering alarm. Zurich: Maintain stealth. Montenegro (bonus mission): Maintain stealth.	VSS-DU
Military Tactics Expert	Belarus 1: Eliminate Zhidkov. Belarus 2: Destroy communications truck. Belarus 2: Destroy power substation. Belarus 2: Shut down gas main. Belarus 2: Destroy bridge to stop tank (team). Yemen 1: Destroy communications equipment. Yemen 2: Destroy SCUD firing mechanism (team). Lorelei: Plant four nukes on the lower levels. Tokyo: Plant C-4 charges on lab floor. Myanmar: Plant four claymores along path. Myanmar: Plant C-4 on each log bridge. Myanmar: Plant C-4 on foot bridge. Ukraine: Complete all objectives.	MGL
Field Efficiency Expert	Complete all single-player-mission deadlines (par time).	Increased Ammo
Survival Tactics Expert	No player deaths in all missions.	Increased Health
Elite Combat Expert	Earn Elite Combat Specialist rating. Earn Elite Combat Sharpshooter rating. Earn Elite Combat Knife Specialist rating. Earn Elite Nonlethal Force Specialist rating. Earn Elite Team Efficiency Specialist rating. Earn Elite Tactical Explosives Specialist rating. Earn Elite Discrete Personnel Elimination Expert rating.	SSP 90

COMMENDATIONS

Commendations are handed down by high-ranking members of the Agency for excelling in certain missions. The Agency member, requirements needed, and weapon awarded are all listed below.

COMMENDATION	REQUIREMENTS	WEAPON AWARDED
Imani Gray	Complete all the objectives in Carthage 1, Carthage 2, and Carthage 3.	93R
Ehud Ben Zohar	Complete all objectives in Yemen 1 and Yemen 2.	Desert Sniper .44
Gary Stoneman	Complete all objectives in Belarus 1, Belarus 2, and Italy (bonus mission).	SR-15
Maggie Powers	Complete all objectives in Minsk.	CZ Mach-9
Lawrence Mujari	Complete all objectives Lorelei and Chechnya (bonus mission).	Riot Shotgun
Teresa Lipan	Complete all objectives in Zurich.	Gewehr G 53
Lian Xing	Complete all objectives in Tokyo, Myanmar, and Kyrgyzstan (bonus mission).	China Type 67
Gabe Logan	Complete all objectives in Ukraine and Montenegro (bonus mission).	Desert Express .50

PS2 TRICKS AND REVIEW ARCHIVE

Game names in cyan indicate a Greatest Hits title. Ratings in red indicate a score of 5 out of 5. ⚡ indicates the game supports online play.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
.hack//INFECTION	Bandai	●●●◖	65
.hack//MUTATION	Bandai	●●●●	69
.hack//OUTBREAK	Bandai	●●●●	73
.hack//QUARANTINE	Bandai	●●●●	76
18 Wheeler American Pro Trucker	Acclaim	●●●●	52
4x4 EVO	GOD Games	●●●●	44
2002 FIFA World Cup	EA Sports	●●●●	58
Ace Combat 04: Shattered Skies	Namco	●●●●◖	51
Activision Anthology	Activision	●●●●	64
Aero Elite: Combat Academy	Sega	●●●	67
The Adventures of Cookie & Cream	Agetec	●●●◖	44
Aggressive Inline	Acclaim	●●●●◖	59
Airblade	Namco	●●●●	53
Airforce Delta Strike	Konami	●●●	78
Alias	Acclaim	●●◖	81
Aliens Versus Predator: Extinction	EA Games	●●●◖	72
All-Star Baseball 2002	Acclaim	●●●◖	44
All-Star Baseball 2003	Acclaim	●●●◖	56
All-Star Baseball 2004	Acclaim	●●●	67
⚡ All-Star Baseball 2005	Acclaim	●●◖	80
Alter Echo	THQ	●●	73
American Idol	Codemasters	●	77
⚡ Amplitude	Sony CEA	●●●●	68
Antz Extreme Racing	Empire	●◖	61
Ape Escape 2	Ubisoft	●●●●◖	70
Aqua Aqua	3DO	●●	42
Arc the Lad: Twilight of the Spirits	Sony CEA	●●●●	70
Arctic Thunder	Midway	●	50
Armored Core 2	Agetec	●●●	39
Armored Core 2: Another Age	Agetec	●●●◖	48
Armored Core 3	Agetec	●●●◖	61
Army Men: Air Attack	3DO	●●●◖	44
Army Men: Green Rogue	3DO	●●	45
Army Men RTS	3DO	●●●●	56
Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2	3DO	●●◖	45
ATV Offroad Fury	Sony CEA	●●●●	42
⚡ ATV Offroad Fury 2	Sony CEA	●●●●	64
ATV Quad Power Racing 2	Acclaim	●●●●	66
⚡ Auto Modellista	Capcom	●●◖	69
Backyard Baseball	Atari	●●◖	81
Backyard Wrestling: Don't Try This at Home	Eidos	●●◖	75
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance	Interplay	●●●●◖	52
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II	Interplay	●●●◖	77
Barbarian	Titus	●●	57
Bass Strike Virtual Fishing Tournament	THQ	●◖	51
Batman: Rise of Sin Tzu	Ubisoft	●●	74
Batman: Vengeance	Ubisoft	●●●	51
Battle Engine Aquila	Atari	●●●◖	65
Battlestar Galactica	Vivendi Universal	●●●	76
Beyond Good & Evil	Ubisoft	●●●●	75
Big Mutha Truckers	Empire	●●●	71
Bionicle: The Game	EA Games	●●◖	75
Black & Bruised	Majesco	●●●●	67
Blade II	Activision	●●	62
Blood Omen 2	Eidos	●●●◖	57
BloodRayne	Majesco	●●●◖	63
Bloody Roar 3	Activision	●●●◖	47
Bloody Roar 4	Konami	●	75
Blowout	Majesco	●●●	77
BMX XXX	Acclaim	●◖	65
Bombastic	Capcom	●●◖	72
Breath of Fire: Dragon Quarter	Capcom	●●●●	67
Britney's Dance Beat	THQ	●●●●	58
The Bouncer	Square EA	●●●	42
Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Chaos Bleeds	Sierra/Fox	●●●◖	73
Bujingai: The Forsaken City	Bam	●●●●	82
Complete the game to unlock all of these modes. All CGs and credit scenes, Hard mode, High scores display, Opening demo game, Select stage, Super mode (Complete the game in hard mode)			
Burnout	Acclaim	●●●●◖	52
Burnout 2: Point of Impact	Acclaim	●●●●	63

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INPUT

18 **PLEASE, MR. POSTMAN**
Look and see if there's a letter in your bag or at opm@ziffdavis.com.

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95 DRIV3R
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99 Karaoke Revolution Volume 2
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Be the best whether you're good or bad.

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Build up your ratings...and your arsenal.

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65 SRS
64 Star Wars Battlefront
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63 TimeSplitters: Future Perfect
44 THUG2: World Destruction Tour
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GOOD, BAD, AND UGLY

ONLINE GAMES

So no one wants to come over to play? Never fear: You don't need friends to enjoy some multiplayer goodness. These are our recommendations for the best online fun—and our warnings about what to stay away from.

FACT OR FICTION?

Stories circulating the Internet claim that in order to apply for a marriage license in *FFXI*, you have to be married in real life. These stories are false.

GOOD

EA SPORTS GAMES

The online service for all the major sports-game companies (EA, ESPN, 989 Sports, Midway) is satisfactory, but EA's stands out for the most important reason: Its games are generally better.

FINAL FANTASY XI

Square Enix USA

●●●●●

Square Enix put a console spin on the traditional (and traditionally PC-based) massively multiplayer RPG format by adding gorgeous graphics, a simplified interface, and (gasp!) a story.

LOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING

EA Games

●●●●●

It's arguable whether *The Return of the King* stands as the one movie adaptation to rule them all, but as far as online experiences based on the events of a film go, nothing tops it.

NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND

EA Games

●●●●◐

You can play all the modes of this gorgeous game online, but the real action is on the drag and drift tracks, where the competition gets extremely fierce. Make sure you have a tricked-out car before going online.

SOCOM II: U.S. NAVY SEALS

Sony CEA

●●●●●

SOCOM II is the reigning king of online PS2 action. Moments of knife-edge tension are interspersed with 16-way shootouts in this tactical-combat shooter.

SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW

Ubisoft

●●●●●

One of the most intimate online PS2 experiences, *Pandora* is best played with people you know. This game requires communication skills and subtlety, good for those who don't fancy the crazed action of *SOCOM*.

BAD

ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2005

Acclaim

●●◐○○

The passable baseball gameplay might have worked well online if it only offered more options. For some reason, you don't have the option to turn off the FielderCam, which pretty much makes the game unplayable. Don't even bother.

EVERQUEST ONLINE ADVENTURES

Sony Online

●●◐○○

Yeah, it's supersuccessful on the PC, but it came out in 1998, and 1998-era graphics in a PS2 game just look fugly. Core gameplay is competent, but why settle for merely competent when you have *FFXI* on the same shelf?

TRIBES: AERIAL ASSAULT

Acclaim

●●◐○○

We're not saying *Tribes* is a bad game. It's a pretty good game, both on PC and PS2. We're saying it's bad to see a teamplay-focused shooter that doesn't let you communicate with your team. No voice or even text chat, just some dumb canned macros. Talk about missing the point.

UGLY

ATV OFFROAD FURY 2

Sony CEA

●●●●○

A great, great game with an awful, awful online mode. Try to set up an online game and you'll feel like you've wandered into a debug menu: no friend lists, no invites—nothing.

AUTO MODELLISTA

Capcom

●●◐○○

One of the worst racers on PS2, *Auto* certainly looks the part—and don't bother with online either. It's slow, buggy, and it boasts what is possibly the most awful control system of any racer.

MY STREET

Sony CEA

●●●○○

Hey, anyone want to dress up as "extreme" tweens and play mediocre minigames online? No? How about mediocre knockoffs of classic arcade games? Anyone? No? Yeah, we don't either.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Butt-Ugly Martians: Zoom or Doom!	Crave	●●	73
Cabela's Big Game Hunter	Activision	●●◖	67
Cabela's Dangerous Hunts	Activision	●●◖	76
Cabela's Deer Hunt 2004 Season	Activision	●●◖	74
Capcom vs. SNK 2	Capcom	●●●●◖	51
Carmen Sandiego: The Secret of the Stolen Drums	Bam	●●◖	77
CART Fury	Midway	●	47
Casper: Spirit Dimensions	TDK Mediactive	●●◖	50
Castlevania: Lament of Innocence	Konami	●●●●	74
The Cat in the Hat	Vivendi Universal	●●	76
⚡Champions of Norrath: Realms of EverQuest	Sony Online	●●●●◖	78
Chaos Legion	Capcom	●●●◖	70
⚡Chessmaster	Ubisoft	●●●◖	70
Choplifter: Crisis Shield	Xicat	●●●	69
City Crisis	Take-Two	●●●	48
Clock Tower 3	Capcom	●●●	68
Colin McRae Rally 3	**Codemasters**	**●●●●●**	**68**
Commandos 2: Men of Courage	Eidos	●●	62
Conflict: Desert Storm	**Gotham Games**	**●◖**	**63**
Conflict: Desert Storm II	Gotham Games	●●●	74
Conflict Zone	Ubisoft	●●◖	63
Contra: Shattered Soldier	Konami	●●●●◖	64
Corvette	Global Star	●●●◖	81
Cool Boarders 2001	Sony CEA	●●●●	46
Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex	**Universal**	**●●●◖**	**51**
Crash Nitro Kart	Vivendi Universal	●●●◖	76
Crazy Taxi	**Acclaim**	**●●●●**	**46**
Crimson Sea 2	Koei	●●●◖	80
Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon	Ubisoft	●●	74
Culdcept	SNK	●●●◖	75
Dark Angel: Vampire Apocalypse	Metro3D	●◖	49
Dark Cloud	**Sony CEA**	**●●●●◖**	**46**
Dark Cloud 2	**Sony CEA**	**●●●●●**	**66**
Dark Summit	THQ	●●●◖	52
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2	**Acclaim**	**●●●◖**	**50**
DDRMAX	Konami	●●●●	63
DDRMAX 2	Konami	●●●●	74
Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore	Tecmo	●●●●◖	39
Dead to Rights	**Namco**	**●●●**	**65**
Def Jam: Vendetta	EA Sports Big	●●●●	67
Defender	Midway	●●●◖	62
⚡Destruction Derby Arenas	Gathering	●●◖	80
Deus Ex: The Conspiracy	Eidos	●●●●◖	56
Devil May Cry	**Capcom**	**●●●●●**	**50**
Devil May Cry 2	Capcom	●●●	66
Dino Stalker	Capcom	●●●◖	61
Disaster Report	Agetec	●●●◖	65
Disgaea: Hour of Darkness	Atlus	●●●●	72
Disney Golf	EA Games	●●●●	61
Disney's Extreme Skate Adventure	Activision	●●●●	73
Disney's PK: Out of the Shadows	Ubisoft	●●◖	63
Disney's Treasure Planet	Sony CEA	●●●◖	64
Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers	Ubisoft	●●●◖	42
Downforce	Titus	●●	57
Downhill Domination	Sony CEA	●●●●	71
Dr. Muto	Midway	●●◖	63
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai	Atari	●●●◖	65
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2	Atari	●●◖	76
Dragon Rage	3DO	●◖	54
Drakan: The Ancients' Gates	Sony CEA	●●●●	53
Drakengard	Square Enix USA	●●	78
Driven	Bam	●	52
Driving Emotion Type-S	Square EA	●●◖	41
Drome Racers	EA Games	●●◖	64
Dropship	Bam	●●●●	57
Dual Hearts	Atlus	●●●	61
Dynasty Tactics	Koei	●●●●◖	61
Dynasty Tactics 2	Koei	●●●●	74
Dynasty Warriors 2	Koei	●●●●	38
Dynasty Warriors 3	Koei	●●●●	52
Dynasty Warriors 3: Xtreme Legends	Koei	●●●◖	65
Dynasty Warriors 4	Koei	●●●●◖	68
Dynasty Warriors 4: Xtreme Legends	Koei	●●●◖	75
Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future	Acclaim	●●◖	56
Egg Mania: Eggstreme Madness	Kemco	●●◖	61
⚡eJay Clubworld	Crave	●●	73
Endgame	Empire	●●	59
Enter the Matrix	Atari	●●●	71
Ephemeral Fantasia	Konami	●◖	49

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Escape From Monkey Island	**LucasArts**	**●●●●●**	**46**
⚡ESPN College Hoops	Sega Sports	●●●◖	76
ESPN International Track & Field	Konami	●●●	39
ESPN International Winter Sports 2002	Konami	●●●●	54
⚡ESPN Major League Baseball	Sega Sports	●●●◖	80
ESPN MLS Extra Time	Konami	●●	44
ESPN National Hockey Night	Konami	●◖	45
ESPN NBA 2Night	Konami	●●	42
ESPN NBA 2Night 2002	Konami	●●●	56
⚡ESPN NBA Basketball	**Sega Sports**	**●●●●●**	**75**
⚡ESPN NHL Hockey	Sega Sports	●●●●◖	73
⚡ESPN NFL Football	Sega Sports	●●●●◖	72
ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding	Konami	●●●	41
ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding 2002	Konami	●●●	53
ESPN X Games Skateboarding	Konami	●●●●	49
Eternal Ring	Agetec	●●	38
Eve of Extinction	Eidos	●●◖	56
Everblue 2	Capcom	●●●	66
Evergrace	Agetec	●●	39
⚡EverQuest Online Adventures	Sony Online	●●◖	66
⚡EverQuest Online Adventures: Frontiers	Sony Online	●●●◖	77
Evil Dead: A Fistful of Boomstick	THQ	●●●	70
Evil Twin	Ubisoft	●●	52
Evolution Skateboarding	Konami	●●◖	63
Evolution Snowboarding	Konami	●	65
Extermination	Sony CEA	●●◖	48
Extreme-G III	Acclaim	●●●●	50
EyeToy: Groove	Sony CEA	●●●●◖	80
F1 2001	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**52**
F1 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	60
F1 Career Challenge	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**71**
F1 Championship	Ubisoft	●●●●	43
F1 Championship Season 2000	EA Sports	●●◖	41
Fallout: Brotherhood of Steel	Interplay	●●◖	78
Fantavision	Sony CEA	●●●●	40
Fatal Frame	Tecmo	●●●●	55
Fatal Frame 2: Crimson Butterfly	Tecmo	●●●●	77
Ferrari F355 Challenge	Sega	●●	61
FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer	EA Sports	●●●●◖	39
FIFA 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	51
FIFA Soccer 2003	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**63**
⚡FIFA Soccer 2004	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**75**
⚡Fight Night 2004	EA Sports	●●●●	80
UNLOCKABLES			
All venues	At the Main menu, highlight My Corner and press ←, ←, ←, →, →, →, ←, →, →.		
Big heads	At the Main menu, highlight My Corner and press ←, →, ←, →, ←, →, ←.		
Big Tigger	In the Record Book menu, go to Most Wins and press ↑, ↑.		
Fighter Maker 2	Agetec	●◖	64
Final Fantasy X	**Square EA**	**●●●●●**	**53**
Final Fantasy X-2	**Square Enix USA**	**●●●●●**	**75**
⚡Final Fantasy XI	**Square Enix USA**	**●●●●●**	**78**
Finding Nemo	THQ	●●●◖	71
Fireblade	Midway	●●◖	59
Fisherman's Challenge	Konami	●●	67
Ford Racing 2	Gotham Games	●●◖	76
Forever Kingdom	Agetec	●◖	53
Formula One 2001	Sony CEA	●●◖	50
Freaky Flyers	Midway	●●●◖	72
Freedom Fighters	**EA Games**	**●●●●●**	**73**
Freekstyle	**EA Sports Big**	**●●●●**	**59**
Freestyle Metal X	Midway	●●●	71
Frequency	Sony CEA	●●●◖	52
Frogger: The Great Quest	Konami	●◖	53
Frogger's Adventure: The Rescue	Konami	●●◖	76
Front Mission 4	Square Enix	●●●●	82
Fugitive Hunter	Encore	●	76
Funkmaster Flex's Digital Hitz Factory	XS Games	●●●●	76
Fur Fighters: Viggo's Revenge	Acclaim	●●●	46
Futurama	Vivendi Universal	●●◖	72
Future Tactics: The Uprising	Crave	●●●◖	81
G1 Jockey 3	Koei	●●●◖	69
Gadget Racers	Conspiracy	●●●◖	50
Galactic Wrestling Featuring Ultimate Muscle	Bandai	●●◖	82
Galerians: Ash	Sammy	●◖	66
Gallop Racer	Tecmo	●●	48
Gallop Racer 2003: A New Breed	Tecmo	●●●	69
Gauntlet: Dark Legacy	Midway	●●●◖	46

GET CONNECTED

THE QUICK AND DIRTY GUIDE TO GETTING YOURSELF ONLINE

For many of you, tearing open your Network Adaptor and plugging everything in will be enough to get you up and running online. More advanced broadband setups require a few more steps, but there's nothing you can't handle.

1

2

3

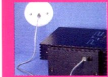
STRAP IT ON

1 Unplug your PS2 and turn it around. See that wide door in the back marked "Expansion Bay"?
2 Pry it off (gently!) with a flat head screwdriver
3 Grab your Network Adaptor and line it up with the slot in the upper right. Press firmly and tighten the screws.

SET IT UP

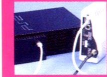
The software setup for the Network Adaptor makes things easy by including presets for the most prominent dial-up Internet service providers Pick your ISP, enter your registration info, and you're good to go. If your ISP isn't included, you'll need to manually input your access number.

Most broadband users will find things similarly simple: Just pick "auto-detect" and get rolling. Some of you may need to get your IP number from your ISP, but most ISPs are familiar with setting up game systems these days.



THE DIAL-UP

Once the Network Adaptor is connected, it's time to get the information flowin'. Dial-up users. Grab a phone cord. Connect one end to the PS2 and the other to a convenient phone jack. Run the setup utility and you're good to go.



BROADBAND: SIMPLICITY ITSELF

The simplest broadband setup is easy as pie. See that wire running between your cable or DSL modem and your PC? The one that looks like a fat phone cord? Unplug it from your PC and plug it into your Network Adaptor. Simple, right?

A WIDENING WEB

If you want to have your PS2 and PC hooked up to your broadband connection at the same time, you'll need to set up a simple home network. First, you need a cable/DSL router (around $35) Once you've got that, you'll have to unplug the Ethernet cable from the back of your PC and plug it into the router; then run another cable back to your PC and yet another to your PS2.

NO STRINGS ATTACHED

Don't want wires all over your house? Grab a wireless cable/DSL router (they're supercheap these days at around $40) and an Ethernet bridge (around $50; note that these prices are for 802.11b wireless—if you want a faster connection you can set up an 802.11g network for about twice the price). Unplug your Ethernet cable from your PC and plug it into the router, then run another cable back to your PC. Run an Ethernet cord from the bridge to your PS2, and put your PS2 wherever you want. Alternately, you can pick up the truly plug-and-play Wireless Net Extender from Nyko for $100 (see our review in issue #75). «

THE GAME PAD

...AND NOW FOR SOMETHING A LITTLE DIFFERENT

1

2

ButtKicker
GAMER
Power
Filter Cutoff
High Cutoff Frequency
Volume

For every conventional, high-end home-theater component for sale, there are always a couple mad scientists in the crowd who aren't content to sit on the couch and play games like a normal person—oh, no! They have to be able to coax the most out of that ol' CRT television from the 1990s. Maybe they want to get ahead of the curve and strap a television to their noggins or have spine-shaking sound pumped directly into their bodies. Sound like anyone you know?

Well, this month the search went out for some of the more unusual home-theater peripherals that are either out now or coming out soon. From speakers that'll rock your posterior to televisions that'll make your head spin, here's a quick peek at the flip side of home theater. And after assembling this month's column, I'm officially ready for the PS5—so I can jack it directly into my brainpan.

AUDIO SIDE

1 SPHEREX THE CHAIR, $1,500

Imagine a comfortable chair in your living room. You drop into it after a long day and turn on the television. Ahhh...BAM! The sound of gunfire is all around you! No, you're not in Iraq, you're sitting atop a 300-watt sound system that vibrates thanks to an 8-inch subwoofer in its base. The chair, which should be available later this year, has a 5.1 surround kit built directly into it. We are not kidding. The strange part is that besides delivering great audio, the chair is also actually quite comfortable. Speaking of strange, you may feel a little rustling down below from the overpowering sound. You see, the center channel shoots straight at your...wait for it...crotch. Pump up the volume at www.spherexinc.com.

2 PYRAMAT PM300, $150

For those who like to recline when they get their game on, unfold the Pyramat and drop to the ground. This isn't going to replace the furniture in your house, but the PM300 is an interesting way to accommodate a couple of extra houseguests in style. The mat part is pretty comfortable, but more interesting is the heavy-duty headrest/backrest. The back houses a 50-watt 2.1 sound system (25-watt left/right speakers, a 25-watt subwoofer). Sure, it doesn't have glorious surround sound, but you'll feel the thing rumble as you play, and it can supplement your current home theater. For details, go to www.pyramat.com.

3 BUTTKICKER GAMER, $150

The Buttkicker is nothing new to home-theater audiophiles—or their pissed-off next-door neighbors. In essence, it's an amp and low-frequency nubbin that shoots out sound waves to make you feel the music. This 150-watt amped version, the Buttkicker Gamer, is custom built for the gaming crowd. Grab your ol' reliable center-post chair (such as a desk chair), clamp this thing below the seat, and feel it go to town on your ass. Ideal for PC and console gaming, this little guy works your body like nobody's business. Hell, it'll even kick your butt when you've got headphones on. Find it at www.thebuttkicker.com.

3
ButtKicker

4
SONY
SONY
SONY

5

6

VIDEO SIDE

4 SONY LOCATIONFREE TV LF-X1 (12.1-INCH MODEL), $1,500

Just because you've got your PS2 and home theater all set up in the house doesn't mean you actually have to be inside the house all the time to appreciate it. With the help of gadgets like this wireless television, you can safely make your way to the great outdoors every once in a while. Just plug your home theater into the base station, and it transmits data via 802.11g to the sharp-looking 12.1-inch LCD panel. Here's the crazy part: If you also grab a wireless controller with a good range, you could conceivably play your games anywhere. Visit www.sonystyle.com.

5 VIRTUAL FX 3D CONVERTER, $200

2D TV screens are so 2000. Why not give your old CRT television a boot in the technological butt with the Virtual FX 3D Converter? Plug the box directly into your television and strap on a pair of the goggles, and it'll convert the picture—your games, movies, whatever—into a 3D experience. OK, so it isn't like going to an IMAX theater, but it works well enough at making Ratchet and Clank pop out of your television. The only catch is that the current generation of these glasses won't work with HD sets. So if you haven't made the jump to HD, congrats. You can at least make the jump to 3D. Check it out at www.razor3d.com.

On a bit of a side note, technology is standing still for no one. Sharp, maker of kick-ass LCD displays, is already hard at work on producing 3D LCD screens that won't require goggles to use. The main problems right now: price, viewing angles, and nausea. In order to get the full effect, you need to be viewing the screen from directly straight on. Try it from the side, and get ready to make a break for the vomitorium. However, Sharp has already integrated these amazing 3D panels into a line of PC notebooks (going for a mere $3,000, which isn't *that* bad). For more info on this stuff, go to www.sharp3d.com.

6 ADS TECH HDUP1500 HDTV UPCONVERTER, $600

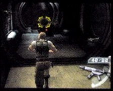
This is actually a great device and a must-have for all you high-end home-theater owners out there. What is it, you may ask, that makes an upconverter so cool? Basically, this unassuming little box takes all those crappy video signals and pretties 'em up for your television. Think of it as an extreme makeover for all of those PS2 games that don't support 480p, 720p, or 1080i. That's right: Take any video signal you've got, pump it through the box, and marvel as the box cleans up the signal so your images appear onscreen at higher resolutions. Got a widescreen television but a game that doesn't have 16:9 aspect-ratio support? Well now it does. Hosting component, S-Video, and composite inputs (three apiece), this device will have you covered. Other upconverters can easily run you at least twice as much, but for high-end tastes on a budget, this is definitely worth checking out—you can find it online at www.adstech.com. « *Darren Gladstone*

GOT QUESTIONS?

Having problems with that stereo hookup? Can't figure out which television to buy? Then e-mail our resident expert Darren Gladstone at darren_gladstone@ziffdavis.com with a subject line of "Game Pad."

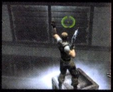
PSI-OPS
THE MINDGATE CONSPIRACY
DIGGING UP THE EVIL GNOMES

GNOME 1



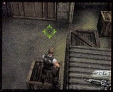
Level	Mission 1
Where	Hallway outside "turret" room
How	After RV training, you come to a door protected by lasers in a hall. Jump over the fence opposite this door and climb into the ditch to find the evil gnome.
Unlocks	Extra mission "Tip the Idol"

GNOME 2



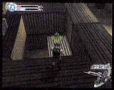
Level	Mission 2
Where	Cryo storage room (Jov boss battle)
How	After the battle between Nick and Jov takes place, TK "surf" an object to the hall encircling the room. Enter through a broken window and run to where Jov first appeared. An evil gnome is waiting.
Unlocks	Extra mission "TK Alley"

GNOME 3



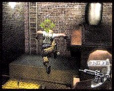
Level	Mission 3
Where	Above shipping yard entrance
How	Upon exiting Barret's office, return outside and TK "surf" a crate to the ledge above the garage door to the right. This garage door leads to the shipping yard. At the top is one of the evil gnomes.
Unlocks	Extra mission "TK Puzzle"

GNOME 4



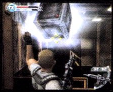
Level	Mission 3
Where	Second part of shipping yard
How	Enter the shipping yard's second portion (after operating the first crane). There are four large shipping containers in the middle of the yard. Use the large crate to hop up onto the containers and into the center to find the evil gnome.
Unlocks	Extra mission "Panic Room"

GNOME 5



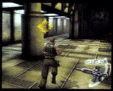
Level	Mission 4
Where	Conveyor room
How	Turn off the conveyor belt by pressing the corresponding switch next to each device. Once free of danger, climb onto the belt and jump over the chain fence in the room's corner. Climb up the ladder here to collect the evil gnome from above the health power-up.
Unlocks	Extra mission "Up and Over"

GNOME 6



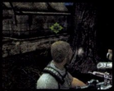
Level	Mission 4
Where	Moving pistons room
How	TK an object or enemy into the third moving piston, disabling it for safe passage. Use the nearby ladder to go down one floor and enter a hidden room through the broken piston's hole.
Unlocks	Extra mission "Bottomless Pit"

GNOME 7



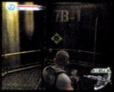
Level	Mission 5
Where	Marble atrium (floor 29)
How	Down the right hall in the room is a breakable vent. Kick it open and crawl inside to find one of the evil gnomes within the ducts.
Unlocks	Extra mission "Pitfall"

GNOME 8



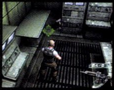
Level	Mission 5
Where	Graveyard
How	Circle around the graveyard in search of the evil gnome while combating enemies. The gnome is behind a tree. Killing the enemies ends the cemetery segment—find the gnome before killing the last enemy.
Unlocks	Extra mission "Survival Mode"

GNOME 9



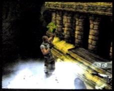
Level	Mission 6
Where	Bottom of first vertical shaft
How	After the electric pulse that circles the hall, you enter a vertical shaft containing a ladder. Take the ladder down to the water to find a floating evil gnome.
Unlocks	Extra mission "Gasoline"

GNOME 10



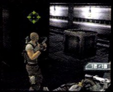
Level	Mission 6
Where	Hall (floor 30)
How	Before walking through the double doors to initiate the Marlena boss battle, go down the hall to the right. To get by, destroy three turret guns. When the hall is clear, look for the evil gnome between the computers in the room at the hall's end.
Unlocks	Extra mission "Psi Pool"

GNOME 11

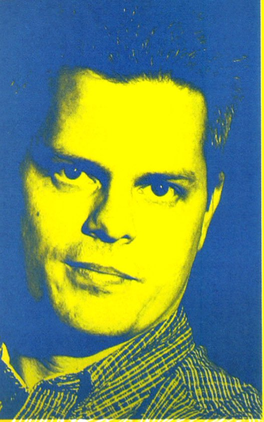


Level	Mission 7
Where	Mission starting point
How	Eliminate the two snipers from their perches above the ground floor. With snipers out of the way, TK "surf" an object up to where they stood. An evil gnome is on the ledge's left side.
Unlocks	Extra mission "Stoplights"

GNOME 12



Level	Mission 8
Where	Control room
How	Nick is able to enter the control room after mind-controlling the guard and entering the number from the whiteboard. Clear the enemies and enter the hall to the right. Behind the fence is an evil gnome. TK the gnome to obtain him.
Unlocks	Extra mission "Aura Pool"



THE MIND BEHIND THE MIND POWERS: SIX QUESTIONS WITH PSI-OPS PROJECT LEAD BRIAN EDDY

OPM How did the idea of *Psi-Ops* come up? What was the original "vision" for the game?

BRIAN EDDY The idea came from information we received about the U.S. military's use of remote viewing in their intelligence-gathering operations. As we continued to research the real-life U.S. and foreign psi-ops programs, we realized that over the last century, all the major world powers have developed psi operations or done fairly extensive research on extrasensory powers. And the idea of a fictional game loosely based on a century of historical facts became too appealing to resist.

OPM What's the one thing in the game you're most proud of?

BE I would have to say the open-ended gameplay. From day one we wanted to make *Psi-Ops* the kind of game where players could use any number of techniques to get by any given situation. Even now, watching other people play is a lot of fun because they try new things that I never would have thought of to get by encounters. I'm a big fan of emergent gameplay, where you assemble a bunch of elements in a world and as they are used and combined in different ways, they take on a life of their own, and players start doing things that you never even imagined could happen. Each time you play the game, it can be in a completely different way.

OPM What would you have liked to have changed, given the time?

BE Late in development we realized that it would be fun to have the psi powers upgrade in some way as you progress through the game. For instance, the basic pyrokinesis attack (a wall of flames) would have upgraded versions that allowed players to throw fireballs, light distant objects on fire, or create a fire shield. Basically, we would have liked to have had more character and psi-power development through the game, but ultimately, due to time constraints and game balance, we decided to hold off for the sequel. There were also a couple of powers that we weren't able to add due to time constraints. Adding vehicles would also have been a lot of fun. Multiplayer was also considered early on, but we knew with all the challenges ahead that we didn't have time to do a great single-player game and a multiplayer online game, so we put all our focus on the single-player experience to make sure it was great.

OPM What games influenced *Psi-Ops*?

BE A lot of different games had an influence on *Psi-Ops* in a lot of different ways. The original *Deus Ex* had a big impact on us because it was one of the first games to make good use of multiple ways to play a game. We liked the simplicity of controls and action in *Devil May Cry*, the stealth in *MGS 1 & 2*, *Max Payne* for its unique gameplay element (bullet time), the *James Bond* series for its variety, *Medal of Honor* for the great presentation, *Halo* for the great action, and even *GTA* for having open-ended gameplay like we planned. There were very few games to look at for reference on using psi powers and none as extensive as what we wanted to do, so we had to design a lot of what we did from scratch. We have a lot of hardcore gamers on the team and routinely debate the good and bad points of every game we could get our hands on. Many of these discussions led to new and better features being added to *Psi-Ops*. We believe that this kind of debate helped make *Psi-Ops* a much better game, though it probably nearly killed a few programmers!

OPM Have you seen *Second Sight* from Free Radical? What do you think? If you could give the developers of *Second Sight* one piece of advice, what would it be?

BE *Psi-Ops* has been in development for two-and-a-half-years, and we've learned a lot along the way on how to make it a better game, but most of it applies directly to our implementation of the psi powers. After getting to see *Second Sight* at E3, our general impression is that even though some of the powers and the story line are similar, Free Radical has taken a much different design approach for its game. The pace of the game and the use of the powers were much slower than they are in *Psi-Ops*, and from the limited playtime we had, it seemed like the gameplay was less open-ended and more story driven than ours. It looks like they will have some character-building attributes, which could be fun. The controls didn't seem very intuitive to a first-time player. So our advice to them would be to get lots of input from other people, hold focus groups, and apply that knowledge to make the game better.

OPM What can you tell us about the sequel? (There *is* going to be a sequel, right?)

BE We absolutely hope so! This is the first game by our team on an engine that we built, and the first time doing anything is always challenging. If we are able to do a sequel, then we could take all the experience that we've gained and all of the great ideas we have for new features and improvements and include them in *Psi-Ops 2*. It would be an incredible game—did someone say online multiplayer? The best way to assure there will be a sequel is to buy the game. «

"THE BEST WAY TO ASSURE THERE WILL BE A SEQUEL IS TO BUY THE GAME."

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
The Getaway	Sony CEA	●●●●	66
Giants: Citizen Kabuto	Interplay	●●●◖	51
Gitaroo-Man	Koei	●●●◖	53
Gladiator: Sword of Vengeance	Acclaim	●●	75
Gladius	LucasArts	●●●●	74
Goblin Commander: Unleash the Horde	Jaleco	●●◖	76
GoDai: Elemental Force	3DO	●◖	54
Gradius III and IV	Konami	●●◖	39
Gran Turismo 3: A-spec	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**46**
Grand Prix Challenge	Atari	●●●◖	68
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City	**Rockstar**	●●●●●	**63**
Grand Theft Auto III	**Rockstar**	●●●●●	**52**
Grandia II	Ubisoft	●●●◖	53
Grandia Xtreme	Enix	●●●◖	62
Gravity Games Bike: Street, Vert, Dirt	Midway	◖	61
The Great Escape	Gotham Games	●●●◖	72
GTC Africa	Majesco	●●◖	58
Guilty Gear X	Majesco/Sammy	●●●●	51
Guilty Gear X2	Sammy	●●●●	66
Gungrave	Sega	●●●◖	61
Gungriffon Blaze	Working Designs	●●●◖	39
Half-Life	**Sierra**	●●●●●	**51**
Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup	EA Games	●●●	75
Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone	EA Games	●◖	76
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	EA Games	●●●◖	64
Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban	EA Games	●●●◖	82
Harvest Moon: Save the Homeland	Natsume	●●●●	51
Haunted Mansion	TDK	●●●	77
Haven: Call of the King	Midway	●●●◖	64
Headhunter	Acclaim	●●●	57
Herdy Gerdy	Eidos	●●●	56
Heroes of Might and Magic	3DO	●●◖	46
Hidden Invasion	Conspiracy	●●●	60
High Heat MLB 2002	3DO	●●●●	44
High Heat MLB 2003	3DO	●●●●◖	55
High Heat MLB 2004	**3DO**	●●●●●	**67**
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin	**Eidos**	●●●●◖	**63**
Hitman: Contracts	Eidos	●●●●◖	81

LEVEL SELECT

Make the hit on any level with this cheat. No waiting, no preparation, all action. At the Main menu, press ⊗, △, ○, ←, ↑, →, L2, R2.

LEVEL SKIP AND BECOME A SILENT ASSASSIN

During gameplay, enter this code: R2, L2, ↑, ↓, ⊗, L3, ○, ⊗, ○, ⊗.

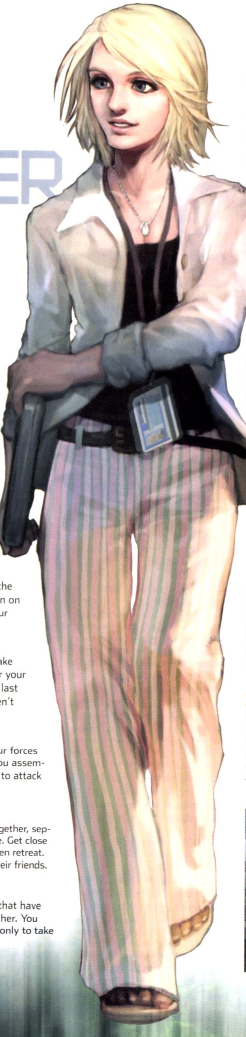
BECOME A TRUE PROFESSIONAL

Turn to Issue 82, page 104 for Prima's Silent Assassin tips.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
The Hobbit	Vivendi Universal	●●●◖	76
Hot Shots Golf 3	**Sony CEA**	●●●●	**55**
Hot Wheels: Velocity X	THQ	●●◖	64
The Hulk	Vivendi Universal	●●●●	70
Hunter: The Reckoning–Wayward	Interplay	●●◖	72
Hypersonic Xtreme	Majesco	●●◖	67
I-Ninja	Namco	●●●◖	75
Ico	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**50**
Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb	LucasArts	●●●	71
Indy Car Series	Codemasters	●●●	71
Intellivision Lives!	Crave	●●●◖	77
Island Extreme Stunts	EA Games	●●●◖	65
The Italian Job	Eidos	●●	72
Jade Cocoon 2	Ubisoft	●●●◖	53
Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**52**
Jak II	Sony CEA	●●●◖	74
James Bond 007: Agent Under Fire	**EA Games**	●●●●	**52**
James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing	EA Games	●●●●◖	79
James Bond 007: NightFire	Activision	●●●●◖	64
James Cameron's Dark Angel	Sierra	●●	65
Jeopardy!	Atari	●●◖	77

TEN TIPS TO MAKE YOU BETTER AT FRONT MISSION 4

HINTS, TACTICS, AND TECHNIQUES



1 Sometimes talking to a person once doesn't cut it. Speak with people a second time to find out if they have any more useful information or something to give you. If they repeat themselves, you know they've told you everything.

2 Some missions start with your squad spread out across the map. Your first priority is to get your group together to form a stronger unit. Wanzers fighting by themselves are easy prey for the enemy.

3 Your Wanzers on the front lines should have the highest evasion percentage. Nothing puts a frown on your enemy's face faster than taking shots at your forces, only to have their bullets miss.

4 When repairing your Wanzers on the field, make sure the body armor has enough hit points. After your body armor is destroyed, so is your Wanzer. The last pieces of armor to worry about are arms that aren't holding any weapons.

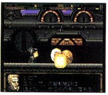
5 Don't charge recklessly into battle. Gather your forces together away from the enemy Wanzers. After you assemble, charge in so that your Wanzers get a chance to attack on the first round.

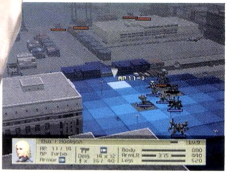
6 If there are multiple groups of enemies close together, separate them so that you don't fight everyone at once. Get close enough to draw the nearest Wanzers into battle, then retreat. You can tear them apart without worrying about their friends.

7 When starting a battle, first use the Wanzers that have explosive ammunition, such as the grenade launcher. You don't want to move your melee fighters in close, only to take damage from your Wanzers later.

DID YOU KNOW?

Front Mission 4 is only the second game in the series to reach American shores. Oddly enough, the second Japanese game released (on Super Famicom, like the original) wasn't *Front Mission Second*—it was a side-scrolling shooter called *Front Mission: Gun Hazard*.





8 When facing multiple enemies, focus your firepower on just one. The quicker you defeat an enemy, the less time you have to worry about taking its fire.

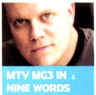
9 You don't have to immediately destroy some Wanzers for them to be considered harmless. If they don't have backpacks or shoulder weapons, fire at them until their arms holding weapons are destroyed. They might be alive, but without a weapon, they won't do you any harm. You can concentrate on the other enemy Wanzers that do have weapons. When there is no more threat to you, move around the map and pick off any helpless Wanzers in the area.

10 An EMP backpack is a great tool to use on the battlefield: Use it to disable an enemy's weapon system. Use it on any attacking Wanzer to shut them down for a few turns while your other forces keep up the firepower. With enough shots, you can destroy them before they are able to fire at you again. «

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Jeremy McGrath Supercross World	Acclaim	●	53
Jet X20	Sony CEA	●●	63
Jonny Moseley Mad Trix	3DO	●◖	54
Judge Dredd: Dredd vs. Death	Evolved Games	●●◖	80
The Jungle Book: Rhythm n' Groove	Ubisoft	●●●	69
Jurassic Park: Operation Genesis	Universal Int.	●●●●◖	68
K-1 World Grand Prix	Konami	●●	71
Karaoke Revolution	Konami	●●●●	75
Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer	Activision	●●●◖	61
Kengo: Master of Bushido	Crave	●●●	42
Kessen	EA Games	●●●	39
Kessen II	Koei	●●●	51
kill.switch	Namco	●●●●◖	75
Kinetica	Sony CEA	●●●●◖	50
The King of Fighters 2000/2001	Bandai	●●◖	76
The King of Route 66	Sega	●●●	67
King's Field: The Ancient City	Agetec	●●	55
Kingdom Hearts	Square EA	●●●●◖	61
Klonoa 2: Lunatea's Veil	Namco	●●●●◖	47
Knockout Kings 2001	EA Sports	●●●●	42
Knockout Kings 2002	EA Sports	●●●●	55
Kya: Dark Lineage	Atari	●●◖	76
La Pucelle: Tactics	Mastiff	●●●●	81
Le Mans 24 Hours	Infogrames	●●◖	48
Legacy of Kain: Defiance	Eidos	●●◖	76
Legaia 2: Duel Saga	Fresh Games	●●●	63
The Legend of Alon D'ar	Ubisoft	●◖	54
Legends of Wrestling	Acclaim	●●◖	53
Legends of Wrestling II	Acclaim	●●●	65
Legion: The Legend of Excalibur	Midway	●●●	59
Lego Racers 2	Lego Media	●●◖	51
Lethal Skies	Sammy	●●●	58
Lethal Skies II	Sammy	●●●◖	74
Looney Tunes: Back in Action	EA Games	●	76
The Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring	Black Label	●●●◖	63
The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers	EA Games	●●●●◖	63
⚡The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King	**EA Games**	●●●●●	**75**
Lowrider	Jaleco	●◖	77
Lupin the 3rd: Treasure of the Sorcerer King	Bandai	●●●◖	78
Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter	Vivendi Universal	●●	71
Mad Maestro!	Eidos/Fresh	●●●	56
Madden NFL 2001	EA Sports	●●●●◖	38
Madden NFL 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	48
⚡Madden NFL 2003	**EA Sports**	●●●●●	**60**
⚡Madden NFL 2004	**EA Sports**	●●●●●	**72**
Mafia	Gathering	●●●◖	79
Magic Pengel: The Quest for Color	Agetec	●●●●	69
Manhunt	Rockstar	●●●◖	76
The Mark of Kri	Sony CEA	●●●	59
Marvel vs. Capcom 2	Capcom	●●●●	61
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2	Activision	●●●●	60
Max Payne	**Rockstar**	●●●●	**53**
Max Payne 2: The Fall of Max Payne	Rockstar	●●●◖	77
Maximo: Ghosts to Glory	**Capcom**	●●●◖	**54**
Maximo vs. Army of Zin	Capcom	●●●●	77
MDK2 Armageddon	Interplay	●●●◖	45
Medal of Honor: Frontline	**EA Games**	●●●●●	**58**
⚡Medal of Honor: Rising Sun	EA Games	●●●◖	76
Mega Man X7	Capcom	●●●◖	74
Men in Black II: Alien Escape	Infogrames	●●◖	60
Metal Arms: Glitch in the System	Vivendi Universal	●●●●	75
Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty	**Konami**	●●●●●	**51**
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance	**Konami**	●●●●●	**67**
Metropolismania	Natsume	●●●	61
Midnight Club	**Rockstar**	●●●●	**39**
⚡Midnight Club II	**Rockstar**	●●●●●	**67**
Midway Arcade Treasures	Midway	●●●◖	76
Mike Tyson Heavyweight Boxing	Codemasters	●	58
Minority Report	Activision	●●◖	65
Mission: Impossible–Operation Surma	Atari	●●	77
Mister Mosquito	Eidos/Fresh	●●●◖	56
MLB 2004	Sony CEA	●●●	67
⚡MLB 2005	Sony CEA	●●●◖	80
MLB Slugfest 20-03	Midway	●●●●	59
MLB Slugfest 20-04	Midway	●●●●	67
Mobile Light Force 2	XS Games	●●●◖	69
Mobile Suit Gundam: Encounters in Space	Bandai	●	75
Mobile Suit Gundam: Federation vs. Zeon	Bandai	●●●◖	61
Mobile Suit Gundam: Journey to Jaburo	Bandai	●	48
Mobile Suit Gundam: Zeonic Front	Bandai	●●●	54
Mojo!	Crave	●●◖	73
Monopoly Party	Infogrames	●●●	65
Monster 4x4: Masters of Metal	Ubisoft	●●◖	77
Monster Rancher 3	Tecmo	●●●●	50
Monster Rancher 4	Tecmo	●●●◖	75
Monsters, Inc.	Sony CEA	●●●◖	55
Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance	Midway	●●●●	64
MotoGP	Namco	●●●●	39
MotoGP2	Namco	●●●●◖	53
MotoGP3	Namco	●●●●◖	67
Motor Mayhem	Infogrames	●●●	47
MTV Music Generator 2	Codemasters	●●●	46
MTV Music Generator 3: This Is the Remix	Codemasters	●●●◖	82 «
MTV's Celebrity Deathmatch	Gotham Games	●◖	76
⚡MTX: Mototrax	Activision	●●◖	80
The Mummy Returns	Universal	●◖	52
Music Maker	Magix	●●●●	69
MVP Baseball 2003	EA Sports	●●●◖	67
⚡MVP Baseball 2004	EA Sports	●●●●◖	80
MX 2002 Featuring Ricky Carmichael	THQ	●●●●	47
MX Rider	Infogrames	●●●◖	52
MX Superfly Featuring Ricky Carmichael	THQ	●●●◖	59
⚡My Street	Sony CEA	●●●	67
Myst III: Exile	Ubisoft	●●●◖	63
Mystic Heroes	Koei	●●◖	64
MX Unleashed	THQ	●●●	79

Enter these codes in the Cheat menu:

UNLOCKABLE	CODE
500cc bikes	BIGDOGS
50cc bikes	SQUIRRELDOG
A.I. bowling	WRECKINGBALL
Career completion	CLAPPEDOUT
Expert A.I.	OBTGOFAST
Freestyle tracks	BUSTBIG
National tracks	ECONATION
Pro physics	SWAPPIN
Supercross tracks	STUPERCROSS
Unlock all vehicles	MINIGAMES



MTV MG3 IN NINE WORDS

"Fantastic for beginners, somewhat less so for wannabe musicians."

Joe Rybicki

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Namco Museum	**Namco**	●●●◖	**53**
NASCAR 2001	EA Sports	●●◖	40
NASCAR Heat	Infogrames	●●●●	47
NASCAR Thunder 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	51
NASCAR Thunder 2003	EA Sports	●●●●◖	62
⚡NASCAR Thunder 2004	**EA Sports**	●●●●●	**73**
NASCAR: Dirt to Daytona	Infogrames	●●●◖	63
Naval Ops: Warship Gunner	Koei	●●●	71
NBA 2K2	**Sega Sports**	●●●●●	**53**
⚡NBA 2K3	**Sega Sports**	●●●●●	**63**
NBA Ballers	Midway Sports	●●●●	80

ROLL LIKE THE PROS DO

With these codes, you'll be mixing beats in A.J.'s studio and wearing Kobe's alternate outfit (no, not the orange jumpsuit—maybe in *Ballers 2*?). Enter these codes under the Phrase-ology menu.

UNLOCKABLE	CODE
Nene Hilario	rags to riches
Oscar Robertson's alternate gear	Ain't No Thing
Pete Maravich	pistol pete
Rashard Lewis	fast forward
Rasheed Wallace	bring down the house
Ray Allen	all star
Reggie Miller's alternate gear	From Downtown
Richard Hamilton	rip
Robert Parish's alternate gear	The Chief
Scottie Pippen	playmaker
Scottie Pippen's yacht	nice yacht
Shaq's alternate gear	diesel rules the paint
Special movie #1	juice house
Special movie #2	nba showtime
Special shoe #1	dub deuce
Stephon Marbury	platinum playa
Steve Francis	ankle breaker
Steve Francis's alternate gear	Rising Star
Steve Nash	hair canada
Tim Duncan	make it take it
Tony Parker's alternative gear	run and shoot
Tracy McGrady	living like a baller
Wally Szczerbiak	world
Walt Frazier	Penetrate and Perpetrate
Wes Unseld	old school
Willis Reed	hall of fame
Wilt Chamberlain	wilt the stilt
Yao Ming	center of attention
Yao Ming's grade school	prep school

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
NBA Hoopz	Midway	●●●	44
NBA Jam 2004	Acclaim	●●◖	75
NBA Live 2001	EA Sports	●●●	42
NBA Live 2002	EA Sports	●●◖	51
⚡NBA Live 2003	EA Sports	●●●●	63
⚡NBA Live 2004	EA Sports	●●●●◖	75
NBA ShootOut 2001	Sony CEA	●●◖	44
NBA ShootOut 2003	Sony CEA	●●●	63
⚡NBA ShootOut 2004	Sony CEA	●●●	75
NBA Starting Five	Konami	●●◖	63
NBA Street	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●●	**47**
NBA Street Vol. 2	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●●	**68**
⚡NCAA College Basketball 2K3	Sega Sports	●●●●	64
NCAA College Football 2K3	Sega Sports	●●◖	60
NCAA Final Four 2001	Sony CEA	●	41
NCAA Final Four 2002	Sony CEA	●◖	52
NCAA Final Four 2003	Sony CEA	●●◖	64
⚡NCAA Final Four 2004	Sony CEA	●●	76
NCAA Football 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	48
⚡NCAA Football 2003	**EA Sports**	●●●●●	**60**
⚡NCAA Football 2004	**EA Sports**	●●●●●	**71**
NCAA GameBreaker 2001	Sony CEA	●◖	41
NCAA GameBreaker 2003	Sony CEA	●●	61
⚡NCAA GameBreaker 2004	Sony CEA	●●◖	73
NCAA March Madness 2002	EA Sports	●●●	53
NCAA March Madness 2003	EA Sports	●●●	64
⚡NCAA March Madness 2004	EA Sports	●●●●	76
Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2	**EA Games**	●●●●●	**62**
⚡Need for Speed Underground	EA Games	●●●●◖	76
NFL 2K2	**Sega Sports**	●●●◖	**52**
⚡NFL 2K3	Sega Sports	●●●●◖	60
NFL Blitz 20-02	Midway	●●●●	55
NFL Blitz 20-03	Midway	●●●◖	60
⚡NFL Blitz Pro	Midway Sports	●●●	74
NFL GameDay 2001	Sony CEA	●	40
NFL GameDay 2002	Sony CEA	●◖	53
⚡NFL GameDay 2003	Sony CEA	●●◖	61
⚡NFL GameDay 2004	Sony CEA	●●●	73
NFL Quarterback Club 2001	Acclaim	●●◖	50
» ⚡NFL Street	EA Sports Big	●●●●◖	78
NHL 2001	EA Sports	●●●●	38
NHL 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	50
NHL 2003	EA Sports	●●●◖	63
⚡NHL 2004	EA Sports	●●●●	73
NHL 2K3	**Sega Sports**	●●●●●	**64**
NHL FaceOff 2001	Sony CEA	●●●◖	43
NHL FaceOff 2003	Sony CEA	●●	64
NHL Hitz 20-02	Midway	●●●●	51
NHL Hitz 20-03	Midway	●●●●◖	62
⚡NHL Hitz Pro	Midway	●●●●	73
Ninja Assault	Namco	●●◖	61
No One Lives Forever	Sierra	●●●◖	56
Okage: Shadow King	Sony CEA	●●●	51
Oni	Rockstar	●◖	43
Onimusha: Warlords	**Capcom**	●●●●	**43**
Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny	**Capcom**	●●●●	**60**
Onimusha 3: Demon Siege	Capcom	●●●●◖	81

NFL STREET

"...a blast to play, especially with friends, and it offers a great challenge that'll keep you busy well into the off-season."

Giancarlo Varanini

HOWDY, PARTNER!

Battle as a cowboy warrior or dressed as a panda. We miss you, Ling Ling!

UNLOCKABLES

- **Samanosuke's special Western outfit**

  When playing as Samanosuke (versus Jacques), complete the game with a higher ending game-point score for Samanosuke or finish the game with Jacques' Western outfit.

- **Samanosuke's panda suit**

  Complete the Oni Training minigame, or have an *Onimusha Blade Warriors* save on your memory card. For added fun, press the L2 button to flip the head on and off with different expressions each time.

- **Jacques' special Western outfit**

  When playing as Jacques (versus Samanosuke), complete the game with a higher ending game-point score for Jacques or finish the game

THE PLAY LIST

YOUR PRIMER TO THE BEST, WORST, AND WEIRDEST OF PLAYSTATION

5
MOST OVERUSED GAME DESCRIPTIONS IN PREVIEWS

How many different ways can you think of to describe a first-person shooter? A new online role-playing game? Apparently, not enough different ways. Which is why no one should ever use the following phrases to describe any type of game ever again.

"This is not your father's ________."
"It will single-handedly reinvent the ____ genre."
"Think *GTA* meets ________."
"This game takes ______ to the next level."
"This is so much more than your typical ______ game."

14 GAMES WE'RE THRILLED GOT KILLED

Having to play crappy games sucks (don't you feel sorry for us?), which is why we're soooo happy someone put the kibosh on these stinkers before we had to review them.

Army Men: Platoon Command
Ballistic: Ecks vs. Sever
Batman: Dark Tomorrow
Carmageddon 2: Carpocalypse Now
Charlie's Angels
Crushed Baseball 2004
Digimon Grand Prix
ESPN Great Outdoor Games: Bass Fishing
Extreme Force: Grant City Anti-Crime
Lego Stunt Rally
NFL GameDay 2005
Sesame Street: The Adventures of Elmo in Grouchland
Thrill Kill
Trophy Bass

10
DEVELOPERS THAT ARE ALSO SIGNS OF THE CHINESE ZODIAC

Hey, baby, what's your sign?

Appaloosa Interactive (*Ecco the Dolphin*)
Big Ape Productions (*MTV's Celebrity Deatmatch*)
The Code Monkeys (*The Simpsons: Skateboarding*)
Naughty Dog (*Jak & Daxter: The Precursor Legacy, Jak II, Jak 3*)
Pitbull Syndicate (*Test Drive*)
Ratbag (*World of Outlaws: Sprint Cars 2002*)
SmartDog (*Downforce*)
Steel Monkeys (*Corvette*)
Swingin' Ape (*Metal Arms: Glitch in the System*)
Warthog (*Battlestar Galactica, Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, Mace Griffin: Bounty Hunter*)

7 BEST OPM COVERS

Yes, we love all of our covers—they're like our own children. But Mom had her favorites, and so do we.

PaRappa the Rapper (Issue 2)

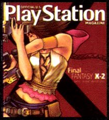
Soul Reaver 2 (Issue 36)

Metal Gear Solid 2 (Issue 51)

Final Fantasy X (Issue 53)

Spider-Man (Issue 56)

Grand Theft Auto: Vice City (Issue 62)


Final Fantasy X-2 (Issue 75)

6
MOST GRATUITOUS SHOWER SCENES

Nothing distracts from less-than-stellar gameplay like steamy-hot chicks. And it's not a bad addition to good gameplay, either.

Cy Girls
Duke Nukem: Land of the Babes
Mortal Kombat: Special Forces
Onimusha 2
Parasite Eve II
Samurai Warriors

11
MOST SCATHING OPM REVIEW VERDICTS

NOW THAT'S QUALITY ENTERTAINMENT!

CRAPTASTIC
In 83 issues, *OPM* has given out the score of .5 to 20 games, 11 of which are featured at the right.

Aces of the Air: "I thought at first that I was crying from the pain of playing this game. Then I realized my eyes were bleeding." **—Joe Rybicki**

Armorines: Project S.W.A.R.M.: "*Armorines* has all the fun of an exorcism." **—Todd Zuniga**

Batman Beyond: Return of the Joker: "Isn't laying down $40 for a waste of plastic like this as good as having it stolen from you?" **—Chris Baker**

Big Bass Fishing: "The only good thing I can think of to say about *Big Bass* is that it doesn't actually smell bad." **—Joe Rybicki**

Gravity Games Bike: Street, Vert, Dirt: "The folks who made this seemed to think your kitchen table was wobbly and needed a slim disc to fix the problem." **—Todd Zuniga**

Hooters Road Trip: "*OutRun* looked better and was a heck of a lot more fun. And it came out in 1986." **—Joe Rybicki**

Largo Winch .// Commando Sar: "Dumb name, dumb game." **—John Davison**

Putter Golf: "Even if you did have some savant-level geometric power, it wouldn't help you, because the game doesn't seem to obey any physical rules I'm familiar with." **—Joe Rybicki**

Racing: "At long last, someone has designed a game aimed squarely at the crucial demographic of coma patients, cave dwellers, and others who have neither driven in a car nor ridden in one, nor seen one portrayed in films or on television, nor had one described in such a way as to confer any fundamental understanding." **—Joe Rybicki**

Shadow Tower: "Only masochists and freakishly loyal *King's Field* fans should even consider renting this pile; everyone else stay the hell away." **—Mark MacDonald**

World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks: "Try staring at the sun for about 15 minutes—no blinking—to get a sense of the sort of masochistic pleasure this supplies." **—Todd Zuniga**

Meet UP @ 1UP.com

The all-new 1UP is here, and it's exploding with new features! We've still got all of that great daily content you've come to know and love, but we're now the first-ever destination for gamers to meet, play, get informed, and show off.

Check out the **cool new stuff** you can do!

If you have a GameFace, we have a place for you to put it.

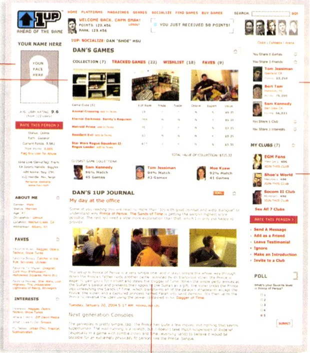
YOUR NAME HERE

YOUR FACE HERE

YOUR GAMEFACE

Show off your game collection and trade games with others!

YOUR GAMES



1UP AHEAD OF THE GAME

HOME PLATFORMS MAGAZINES GENRES SOCIALIZE FIND GAMES BUY GAMES SEARCH: GO!

WELCOME BACK, CAPN SMAK!
POINTS: 120,456
RANK: 123,456
LOGOUT

YOU JUST RECEIVED 50 POINTS!

1UP: SOCIALIZE: DAN "SHOE" HSU

YOUR NAME HERE

YOUR FACE HERE

AVG. USER RATING 9.6

RATE THIS PERSON >

DAN'S GAMES

COLLECTION (7) TRACKED GAMES (22) WISHLIST (18) FAVES (9)

Animal Crossing

Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem

Metroid Prime

Resident Evil

Star Wars Rogue Squadron II: Rogue Leader

Sam Kennedy
96% Match
45 Games

Tom Jessiman
94% Match
43 Games

Moe Kyaw
92% Match
41 Games

Tom Jessiman

Bert Tam

Sam Kennedy

MY CLUBS (7)

EGM Fans
JOIN THIS CLUB

Shoe's World
JOIN THIS CLUB

Socom II Club
JOIN THIS CLUB

See All 7 Clubs

RATE THIS PERSON >

- Send A Message
- Add as a Friend
- Leave Testimonial
- Ignore
- Make an Introduction
- Invite to a Club

DAN'S 1UP JOURNAL

My day at the office

Tuesday, January 20, 2004 5:17 AM

Next generation Consoles

ABOUT ME

FAVES

INTERESTS

POLL

SUBMIT

Get YOUR GameFace on.

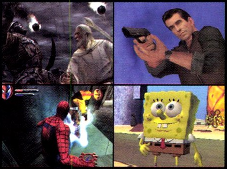
11
BOOKS WITH A RATING OF AT LEAST 4 STARS ON AMAZON.COM THAT HAVE BEEN REINCARNATED AS VIDEOGAMES

HOLLYWOOD STEALS FROM LITERATURE, VIDEOGAMES STEAL FROM HOLLYWOOD....

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, Chamber of Secrets, and *Prisoner of Azkaban*
The Lord of the Rings trilogy
The Most Dangerous Game (*Manhunt*)
The Planet of the Apes
The Sum of All Fears
Tales From Arabian Nights (*Aladdin in Nasira's Revenge*)
Tarzan of the Apes (*Tarzan: Untamed*)

4 BEST GAMES FROM A MOVIE OR TV FRANCHISE

In case you haven't figured it out yet, most games based on movie and TV franchises have been created for the sole purpose of getting more of your money. Happily, every once in a while, there comes along an exception to the rule. These are those exceptions.



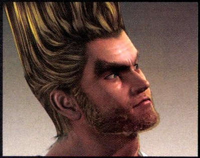
The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King
James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing
Spider-Man
SpongeBob SquarePants: Battle for Bikini Bottom

4 WORST HAIRCUTS IN GAMING

SOMEONE FIND THESE GUYS A REALITY MAKEOVER SHOW, STAT!

Solid Snake (*Metal Gear Solid*)

Seymour (*Final Fantasy X*)



Paul Phoenix (*Tekken*)

Cloud Strife (*Final Fantasy VII*)

7 TITLE CHANGES WHERE THE TITLE STILL SUCKS

Lots of people spent lots of time in lots of meetings to come up with these "improvements."

Drag-On Dragoon > *Drakengard*
ESPionage > *Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy*
Donald Duck as PK > *Disney's PK: Out of the Shadows*
Chase the Express > *Covert Ops: Nuclear Dawn*
The Devil and I > *Okage: Shadow King*
WWX: Rumble Rose > *Rumble Roses*
Yanya Caballista Featuring Gawoo > *Yanya Caballista: City Skater*

9 PS1 GAMES YOU'VE NEVER PLAYED

And have no reason to.

Dirt Jockey
Equestrian Showcase
Gubble
Humans
Largo Winch .// Commando Sar
Mort the Chicken
Miracle Space Race
Phix: The Adventure
Sports Superbike 2

5 BEST GAMES PORTED FROM THE PC

The granddaddy of games has provided some pretty good ones for PS2.

Escape From Monkey Island
Half-Life
Quake 2
Quake 3
Red Faction

6 "SPORTS" WE DON'T WANT TO SEE ANY MORE GAMES BASED ON

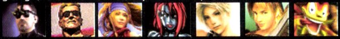
We like our games to feature actual gameplay.

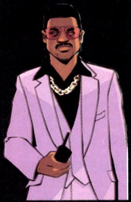
Angler fishing
Bass fishing
Bowling
Hunting
Pool
Hot Wheels racing

7 GAME CHARACTERS WE'D LIKE TO SEE ON A SEASON OF THE REAL WORLD

This is the story of seven strangers, picked to live in a house. Find out what happens when people stop being polite and start getting real.

Sam Fisher—loner, **Duke Nukem**—frat boy, **Rikku**—party chick, **BloodRayne**—goth girl, **Vaan**—metrosexual, **Sophitia**—naïve priss, **Daxter**—Puck





13 TOP-SELLING PS2 GAMES OF ALL TIME

Let's hear it for PlayStation 2! Of the 20 top-selling games for this generation of consoles, 17 are PlayStation 2 titles. And it seems you all love your *Madden*, which means you'll adore this month's cover story.

Grand Theft Auto: Vice City
Grand Theft Auto III
Gran Turismo 3
Madden NFL 2004
Madden NFL 2003
Final Fantasy X
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3
Medal of Honor: Frontline
Metal Gear Solid 2
Madden NFL 2002
Kingdom Hearts
Need for Speed Underground
Spider-Man

12 TOP VIDEOGAME ROLES OF VOICE ACTOR JENNIFER HALE

THOUGHT YOU'D HEARD HER VOICE BEFORE? CHANCES ARE, YOU WERE RIGHT...

Elizabet in *Maximo vs. Army of Zin*
Michelle Aubert in *Onimusha 3*
Delma in *Arc the Lad: Twilight of the Spirits*
Flora in *Tak and the Power of Juju*
Rogue in *X2: Wolverine's Revenge*
Emma Emmerich in *Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance*
Galadriel in *Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*
Elena in *Grandia II*
Dr. Naomi Hunter in *Metal Gear Solid*
Black Cat in *Spider-Man (2000)*
‹ **Prier** in *La Pucelle: Tactics*
Bar wench in *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance*

10 WEIRDEST/SCARIEST PROMOTIONAL ITEMS FOR GAMES

There aren't many marketing meetings that we'd want to be a part of. But we're *incredibly* happy we were nowhere near the gatherings where these promotional items were dreamed up—especially given the apparent fixation with undergarments.

‹ **Boxers** (*Maximo, Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando, SpongeBob SquarePants: Battle for Bikini Bottom*)

Passion powder (*The Sims: Bustin' Out*)

A rock (*Arc the Lad*)

Slimey brain (*Psi-Ops*)

Coffees and teas (*Onimusha 3*)

Nightstick (*State of Emergency*)

Pair of briefs (*Choplifter: Crisis Shield*)

Garroting wire with belt pouch (*Manhunt*)

Coffin full of whiskey (*Darkwatch*)

Thong (*Rumble Roses*)

9 SNEAKY PRODUCT PLACEMENTS

Advertising: It's not just for commercials anymore. Always hunting for innovative ways to reach an audience, these companies are choosing a new digital medium—your PS2.

Puma in *True Crime: Streets of L.A.*
Diesel in *G-Police*
Sony Ericsson in *Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow*
McDonald's in *Tony Hawk's Underground*
Powerade in *Enter the Matrix*
Coke in *Parasite Eve II*
Red Bull in *Worms 3D* (European version only)
Bawls in *Run Like Hell*
KFC (and many more) in *Crazy Taxi*

7 WORST CELEBRITY-ENDORSED GAMES

Just because you're famous doesn't mean we want to be you in a game—especially if your game sucks.

Alexi Lalas International Soccer
Jeremy McGrath Supercross World
Jimmy Johnson VR Football
Jonny Moseley Mad Trix
Mary-Kate and Ashley: Sweet 16–Licensed to Drive
Mike Tyson Heavyweight Boxing
Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder

YOUR TURN

Have your own list ideas? Email them to **opm@ziff-davis.com** with the subject header of "Play List" and look for the best in an upcoming issue.

with Samanosuke's special outfit.

- **Michelle's wet bathroom look**

  Complete the game with an S ranking on Normal or higher difficulty.
- **The Adventures of Heihachi**

  Complete the game, and this new mode will open up, enabling you to play as Heihachi.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Orphen: Scion of Sorcery	Activision	●●●	39
Pac-Man Fever	Namco	●●	60
Pac-Man World 2	**Namco**	●●●●◖	**54**
PaRappa the Rapper 2	Sony CEA	●●●◖	53
Paris-Dakar Rally	Acclaim	●●	53
Pirates: The Legend of Black Kat	EA Games	●●●◖	55
Pitfall: The Lost Expedition	Activision	●●	80
Portal Runner	3DO	●●	50
The Powerpuff Girls: Relish Rampage	Bam	●●	65
Pride FC	THQ	●●●●	65
Primal	Sony CEA	●●●●	68
Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time	**Ubisoft**	●●●●●	**75**
Pro Race Driver	Codemasters	●●●●◖	65
Project Eden	Eidos	●●●◖	52
Pryzm Chapter One: The Dark Unicorn	TDK Mediactive	●●◖	60
Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy	Midway	●●●●◖	82
P.T.O. IV	Koei	●●●	66
Q-Ball Billiards Master	Take-Two	●●●◖	40
Quake III Revolution	EA Games	●●●●◖	44
R: Racing Evolution	Namco	●●●●	76
R-Type Final	Eidos/Fresh Games	●●●●	78
Rally Fusion: Race of Champions	Activision	●●●	64
Ratchet & Clank	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**63**
Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**75**
Rayman 2: Revolution	**Ubisoft**	●●●●●	**41**
Rayman 3: Hoodlum Havoc	Ubisoft	●●●◖	67
Rayman Arena	Ubisoft	●●●◖	57
RC Revenge Pro	Acclaim	●●◖	41
Ready 2 Rumble Boxing Round 2	Midway	●●●●	40
Real Pool	Infogrames	●●●◖	40
Red Card Soccer 20-03	Midway	●●●	57
Red Dead Revolver	Rockstar	●●●●	82

LEVEL REWARDS The first column of rewards is for a Good rating, and the second column is for an Excellent rating.

[C] = Character, **[L]** = Level, **[U]** = Upgrade, **[W]** = Weapon

LEVEL	GOOD REWARD	EXCELLENT REWARD
Bull's Eye	**[U]** old pistol	**[L]** Broken Creek
Bounty Hunter	**[C]** "Bloody" Tom	**[C]** "Big Oaf" Whitney
Ugly Streetfight	**[C]** "Ugly" Chris	**[L]** Freak Show
Railroaded	**[U]** owl rifle	**[C]** Rico Pedrosa
Carnival Life	Dead-Eye max-up	**[C]** "Pig" Josh
Freak Show	Health max-up	**[U]** breech loader
Rogue Valley	**[C]** Cooper	**[C]** Bad Bessie
Cemetery	**[L]** Ghost Town	**[C]** Mr. Black
Range War	**[L]** The Ranch	**[C]** Holstein Hal
Saloon Fight	**[C]** Dan	**[C]** Sam
The Traitor	**[L]** The Bridge	Health max-up
Sunset Canyon	**[U]** twin revolvers	Dead-Eye max-up
Bear Mountain	**[C]** Shadow Wolf	Dead-Eye max-up
The Mine	**[L]** The Mine	**[C]** "Smiley" Fawler
Hell Pass	**[C]** Buffalo	**[C]** Gabriel Navarro
Fort Diego	Health max-up	**[C]** Colonel Daren
Devils & Angels	**[L]** The Ranch	**[C]** General Diego
Battle Finale	Dead-Eye max-up	**[C]** Mr. Kelley
The Siege	**[L]** Mansion Grounds	**[C]** Jason Cornet
Fall From Grace	**[W]** scorpion revolver	**[C]** Governor Griffon

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Red Faction	**THQ**	●●●●●	**46**
Red Faction II	THQ	●●●●	63
Reel Fishing III	Natsume	●●●●	72
Reign of Fire	Bam	●●●◖	63
Resident Evil Code: Veronica X	**Capcom**	●●●●◖	**48**
Resident Evil: Dead Aim	Capcom	●●●◖	70
Resident Evil Outbreak	Capcom	●●●◖	81
Return to Castle Wolfenstein: OR	Activision	●●●◖	71
Rez	Sega	●●●●◖	53
Ribbit King	Bandai	●●●	82
Ridge Racer V	Namco	●●●●◖	38
Riding Spirits	Bam	●●●◖	61
Ring of Red	Konami	●●●●	43
» Rise to Honor	Sony CEA	●●●	78
⚡Risk: Global Domination	Atari	●●●●	73
RLH: Run Like Hell	Interplay	●●●	62
Road Kill	Midway	●●●●	74
Road Trip	Conspiracy	●●●●	61
Robin Hood: Defender of the Crown	Capcom	●●◖	74
Rocky	Ubisoft	●●●●	64
Robot Alchemic Drive	Enix	●●●●	63
Robotech: Battlecry	TDK	●●●◖	62
Rogue Ops	Kemco	●●◖	75
Romance of the Three Kingdoms VII	Koei	●●◖	60
Romance of the Three Kingdoms VIII	Koei	●●●	73
RPG Maker 2	Agetec	●●●◖	74
RTX Red Rock	LucasArts	●●	71
Rugby	EA Sports	●●●◖	48
Rugby 2004	EA Sports	●●●	73
Rumble Racing	EA Games	●●●●◖	45
Rune: Viking Warlord	Take-Two	●●◖	48
Rygar: The Legendary Adventure	Tecmo	●●●●◖	64
Salt Lake 2002	Eidos	●●◖	55
Samurai Jack: The Shadow of Aku	Sega	●●●●	80
Samurai Warriors	Koei/EA	●●●●	81
Saturday Night Speedway	Atari	●●◖	81
Savage Skies	Bam	●●●	56
Scooby-Doo! Mystery Mayhem	THQ	●●●	81
Scooby-Doo! Night of 100 Frights	**THQ**	●●●	**58**
The Scorpion King: Rise of the Akkadian	Universal	●●	62
Secret Weapons Over Normandy	LucasArts	●●●●	75
Seek and Destroy	Conspiracy	●●●◖	66
Sega Bass Fishing Duel	Sega	●●●	62
Sega Soccer Slam	Sega Sports	●●	62
Sega Sports Tennis	Sega Sports	●●●●◖	60
⚡Serious Sam: Next Encounter	Global Star	●●●◖	81
Seven Samurai 20XX	Sammy	●●	80
Shadow Hearts	Midway	●●●●	52
Shadow of Destiny	Konami	●●●◖	43
Shadow Man: 2econd Coming	Acclaim	●●	57
Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder	Activision	●●◖	52
Shifters	3DO	●	58
» Shinobi	Sega	●●●◖	63
Shox	EA Sports Big	●●●◖	63
Shrek 2	Activision	●●●◖	82
Shrek Super Party	TDK Mediactive	●●◖	64
Siren	Sony CEA	●●●	81
Silent Hill 2	**Konami**	●●●●◖	**50**
Silent Hill 3	Konami	●●●●◖	71
Silent Line: Armored Core	Agetec	●●●◖	70
Silent Scope	Konami	●●●	39
Silent Scope 2	Konami	●●●◖	49
Silent Scope 3	Konami	●●●◖	62
Silpheed: The Lost Planet	Working Designs	●●●◖	40
The Simpsons: Hit & Run	Vivendi Universal	●●●●	72
The Simpsons: Road Rage	**EA Games**	●●●	**52**
The Simpsons Skateboarding	EA Games	●◖	64
The Sims	EA Games	●●●●	65
⚡The Sims: Bustin' Out	EA Games	●●●●◖	76
Sky Gunner	Atlus	●●●◖	58
Sky Odyssey	Activision	●●●	40
Sled Storm	EA Sports Big	●●●◖	55
Sly Cooper and the Thievius Raccoonus	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**62**
Smash Cars	Metro3D	●●●◖	71
Smash Court Tennis: Pro Tournament	Namco	●●●◖	56
Smash Court Tennis: Pro Tournament 2	Namco	●●●●	82
Smuggler's Run	**Rockstar**	●●●●◖	**39**
Smuggler's Run 2: Hostile Territory	Rockstar	●●●●◖	52
Soccer America: International Cup	Hot-B	●●	48
Soccer Mania	EA/Lego	●●●◖	59
⚡SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**60**
⚡SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**75**
Soldier of Fortune	Majesco	●●●	52
Sonic Heroes	Sega	●●	77
Soul Calibur II	**Namco**	●●●●●	**72**
Soul Reaver 2	Eidos	●●●	52
Space Channel 5 Special Edition	Sega	●●●◖	75
Space Race	Infogrames	●●◖	59
Spawn Armageddon	Namco	●◖	76
Speed Kings	Acclaim	●●●●	70
Sphinx and the Cursed Mummy	THQ	●●●◖	75
Spider-Man	**Activision**	●●●●◖	**57**
Splashdown	Infogrames	●●●●	52
Splashdown: Rides Gone Wild	**THQ**	●●●●●	**72**
SpongeBob SquarePants: Battle for Bikini Bottom	THQ	●●●●◖	75
SpyHunter	**Midway**	●●●●◖	**50**
SpyHunter 2	Midway	●●●	76
Spyro: Enter the Dragonfly	Vivendi Universal	●●●	64
SSX	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●●	**38**
SSX Tricky	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●●	**52**
⚡SSX 3	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●●	**74**
Star Trek: Shattered Universe	TDK	●●	75
Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force	Majesco	●●◖	53
Star Wars Bounty Hunter	LucasArts	●●●	64
Star Wars: The Clone Wars	LucasArts	●●●	65
Star Wars Super Bombad Racing	LucasArts	●●	45
Star Wars Jedi Starfighter	LucasArts	●●●◖	56
Star Wars Racer Revenge	LucasArts	●●●●◖	55
Star Wars Starfighter	**LucasArts**	●●●●◖	**43**
Starsky & Hutch	Gotham Games	●●	74
State of Emergency	**Rockstar**	●●●	**55**
Stitch: Experiment 626	Sony CEA	●●◖	59
Street Fighter EX 3	Capcom	●●●◖	39
Street Hoops	Activision	●●●◖	60
Stretch Panic	Conspiracy	●●●◖	47
Strike Force Bowling	Crave	●◖	82
Stuntman	Infogrames/Atari	●●●	59
Sub Rebellion	Metro 3D	●●●●	62
The Suffering	Midway	●●●	80

JET LI FLICK

"He probably went to the same police academy as Max Payne, since they both like to leap to the side, guns akimbo, in slow motion."

Thierry Nguyen

WORK OF ART

"*Shinobi* is just one of those games that you know feels good from the second you pick up the controller."

Sam Kennedy

UNLOCKABLES

- **Full health**

  Hold L1 + R1 + ⊗ and press ⬇, ⬇, ⬇, R2, ⬆, ⬆, ⬇, ⬆, R2.
- **Full Xombium bottle**

  Hold L1 + R1 + ⊗ and press ➡, ➡, ⬆, ⬆, R2, ⬅, ➡, R2, ➡, ⬆, ➡, R2.
- **Reload ammunition for current gun**

  Hold L1 + R1 + ⊗ and press ➡, ➡, ⬇, ⬆, Left, ➡, ⬅, ⬅, R2.
- **Refill ranged-weapon ammunition**

  Hold L1 + R1 + ⊗ and press ⬅, ⬅, ⬆, ⬇, ➡, ⬅, ➡, ➡, R2.
- **Shotgun with full ammunition**

  Hold L1 + R1 + ⊗ and press ⬅, ⬅, ⬅, ⬇, ⬇, ⬇.
- **All items and weapons except for Gonzo gun**

  Hold L1 + R1 + ⊗ and press ⬇, ⬆, ⬇, ⬅, ➡, ⬅, R2, ⬆, ⬅, ⬇, ➡, ⬆, Right, ⬇, ⬅, R2, ⬇, ⬇, ⬇, R2, R2.
- **Gonzo gun**

  Hold L1 + R1 + ⊗ and press ⬅, R2, R2, R2, ➡, ⬅, ➡, ⬅, ⬆, R2, R2, R2, ⬇, ⬆, ⬇, ⬆, R2.
- **Grenades**

  Hold L1 + R1 + ⊗ and press ➡, ➡, ➡, ⬅, ⬅, ⬅.
- **Molotov cocktails**

  Hold L1 + R1 + ⊗ and press ⬇, ⬇, ⬇, ⬆, ⬆, ⬆.
- **Increase negative karma**

  Hold L1 + R1 + ⊗ and press ⬅, ⬅, ⬇, ⬆, R2.
- **Overcome insanity**

  Hold L1 + R1 + ⊗ and press ➡, ➡, ➡, R2, ⬅, ⬅, ➡, ⬅, R2.
- **Bloody Torque**

  Hold L1 + R1 + ⊗ and press ⬆, ⬇, ⬅, ➡.
- **Clean Torque**

Hold L1 + R1 + ✕ and press ⬇, ⬆, ➡, ⬅.

- Old movie mode

Hold L1 + R1 + ✕ and press ⬆, R2, ⬅, ⬅, R2, ⬇, R2, ➡, R2

- Psychedelic mode

Hold L1 + R1 + ✕ and press ⬅, ⬅, R2, ➡, ➡, R2, ⬆, ⬆, R2, ⬇, ⬇, R2

- New family picture

Hold L1 + R1 + ✕ and press ⬆, ➡, ⬆, ➡, ⬆, ➡, R2

- Wrinkled family picture

Hold L1 + R1 + ✕ and press ⬆, ⬆, ➡, ⬆

- Dirty family picture

Hold L1 + R1 + ✕ and press ⬅, ⬇, ⬅, ⬇, ⬅, ⬇, R2

- Suicide

Hold L1 + R1 + ✕ and press ⬇, ⬇, ⬇, ⬇

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Suikoden III	Konami	●●●	63
Summer Heat Beach Volleyball	Acclaim	●●●◖	72
Summoner	THQ	●●●	39
Summoner 2	THQ	●●●◖	62
Sunny Garcia Surfing	Ubisoft	●●●◖	51
Super Bust-A-Move	Acclaim	●●●	41
Super Bust-A-Move 2	Ubisoft	●●●◖	63
Super Trucks Racing	XS Games	●◖	76
Supercar Street Challenge	Activision	●●◖	52
Superman: Shadow of Apokolips	Atari	●●●◖	63
Surfing H3O	Rockstar	●●	40
SWAT: Global Strike Team	Sierra	●●●	74
Swing Away Golf	EA Games	●●●	38
⚡Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain	Sony CEA	●●●	81

GET RATED

Want to learn how to clean up all those extra goodies? Turn to page 106 for the quickest route to an arsenal of your choice.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Tak and the Power of Juju	THQ	●●●◖	75
Tarzan: Untamed	Ubisoft	●●●◖	52
Taz: Wanted	Infogrames	●●●◖	60
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Konami	●●◖	75
Tekken 4	Namco	●●●◖	61
Tekken Tag Tournament	**Namco**	●●●●●	39
Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven	Activision	●●●	67
The Terminator: Dawn of Fate	Atari	●●◖	63
Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines	Atari	●◖	77
Test Drive	**Infogrames**	●●●◖	58
Test Drive Off-Road: Wide Open	Infogrames	●●●	48
Tetris Worlds	THQ	●●	57
Theme Park Roller Coaster	EA Games	●●●●	41
The Thing	Universal	●●●	62
Thunderstrike: Operation Phoenix	Eidos	●◖	52
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2001	EA Sports	●●●	44
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2002	EA Sports	●●●●	55
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2003	EA Sports	●●●●◖	63
⚡Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004	**EA Sports**	●●●●●	**73**
Time Crisis 2	Namco	●●●●	49
Time Crisis 3	Namco	●●●●◖	74
TimeSplitters	**Eidos**	●●●●●	**39**
TimeSplitters 2	**Eidos**	●●●●●	**63**
Tokyo Xtreme Racer 3	Crave	●●	76
Tokyo Xtreme Racer Zero	Crave	●●◖	45
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	Ubisoft	●●●◖	65
⚡Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm	Ubisoft	●●●◖	78
⚡Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3	Ubisoft	●●●●	80

TEAM RAINBOW IS AT IT AGAIN

Use this cheat to unlock any mission map you want to play, then tighten the screws on your squad and go bang. Enter this code at the Main menu: L1, R2, L2, R1, ⬅, ➡, □, ○.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell	Ubisoft	●●●●◖	68
⚡Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow	Ubisoft	●●●●●	82

PUTTING THE "FUN" IN FUNDAMENTALS

Work on the basics and advanced techniques will follow. Turn to page 104 for hints on how to play both sides online.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness	Eidos	●●	72
⚡Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	**Activision**	●●●●●	51
⚡Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4	**Activision**	●●●●●	63
⚡Tony Hawk's Underground	**Activision**	●●●●●	**76**
Top Angler	Xicat	●●●◖	57
Top Gear Dare Devil	Kemco	●●●◖	41
Top Gun: Combat Zones	Titus	●●●	50
Total Immersion Racing	Empire	●	66
Transformers	Atari	●●●◖	81
Transworld Surf	Infogrames	●●●◖	57
⚡Tribes: Aerial Assault	Sierra	●●●◖	62
Triple Play 2002	EA Sports	●●	55
Triple Play Baseball	EA Sports	●●	45
⚡Trivial Pursuit: Unhinged	Atari	●●	81
True Crime: Streets of L.A.	Activision	●●	76
Tsugunai: Atonement	Atlus	●●●	53
Turok: Evolution	Acclaim	●◖	62
Twisted Metal: Black	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	47
⚡Twisted Metal: Black Online	Sony CEA	●●●●	61
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger	EA Games	●●●	62
UEFA Euro 2004	EA Sports	●●●●◖	82
UFC Throwdown	Crave	●●●◖	58
UFC Sudden Impact	Crave	●●●◖	82
Unison	Tecmo	●●●◖	44
Unlimited Saga	Square Enix	●●	70
Unreal Tournament	Infogrames	●●◖	40
V-Rally 3	Infogrames	●●●●◖	64
Vampire Night	Namco	●●◖	52
Van Helsing	Vivendi Universal	●●●◖	82
Vexx	Acclaim	●●	67
Victorious Boxers	Empire	●●●◖	51
Virtua Fighter 4	**Sega**	●●●●●	55
Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution	**Sega**	●●●●●	72
Virtual on Marz	Sega	●●	76
Wakeboarding Unleashed	Activision	●●●●◖	70
Wallace & Gromit in Project Zoo	Bam	●●●	74
War Jetz	3DO	●●◖	48
War of the Monsters	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**64**
⚡Warhammer 40,000: Fire Warrior	THQ	●●◖	74
Warriors of Might & Magic	3DO	●●◖	44
Wave Rally	Eidos	●◖	53
Way of the Samurai	Bam	●●●◖	59
Way of the Samurai 2	Capcom	●●●	82
Wheel of Fortune	Atari	●●◖	76
Whiplash	Eidos	●●●◖	76
Whirl Tour	Vivendi Universal	●●	63
Whiteout	Konami	●	65
Wild Arms 3	Sony CEA	●●●◖	62
Wild Wild Racing	Interplay	●●●	39
Winback	Koei	●●●●	43
Wipeout Fusion	Bam	●●●●◖	57
Wizardry: Tale of the Forsaken Land	Atlus	●●●	53
Woody Woodpecker: Buzz Buzzard Park	DreamCatcher	●●●	57
⚡World Championship Pool 2004	Jaleco	●●●◖	76
World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks	3DO	●●●	42
World of Outlaws: Sprint Cars	Infogrames	●●●●	55
World Series Baseball 2K3	Sega Sports	●●●●	67
World Soccer: Winning Eleven 6 Int'l	**Konami**	●●●●●	**67**
World Soccer: Winning Eleven 7 Int'l	**Konami**	●●●●●	**78**
World Tour Soccer 2002	Sony CEA	●●●●	53
World Tour Soccer 2003	Sony CEA	●●●●	65
⚡World Tour Soccer 2004	Sony CEA	●●●	80
Wrath Unleashed	LucasArts	●◖	78
WRC: World Rally Championship	**Bam**	●●●●●	**57**
Wreckless: The Yakuza Missions	Activision	●●	63
WTA Tour Tennis	Konami	●	57
WWE Crush Hour	THQ	●●◖	68
WWE SmackDown! Here Comes the Pain	THQ	●●●◖	76
WWE SmackDown! Shut Your Mouth	THQ	●●◖	64
WWE SmackDown! Just Bring It	**THQ**	●●●◖	52
X Squad	EA Games	●●●◖	38
The X-Files: Resist or Serve	Vivendi Universal	●●◖	81
X-Men: Next Dimension	Activision	●●●	64
X2: Wolverine's Revenge	Activision	●●●	69
Xenosaga: Episode 1—Der Wille Zur Macht	Namco	●●●●	66
XGRA: Extreme-G Racing Association	Acclaim	●●●●◖	74
⚡XIII	Ubisoft	●●●◖	75
Yanya Caballista: City Skater	Koei	●●●◖	49
Yu-Gi-Oh! The Duelists of the Roses	Konami	●●◖	67
Zapper	Infogrames	●●◖	64
Z.O.E: Zone of the Enders	Konami	●●●●◖	44
Zone of the Enders: The 2nd Runner	Konami	●●●●◖	68

READER REVIEWS

NOT FEELING SO SPEEDY

AUDIO ZOUND
HEAR THE DIFFERENCE
QUEN
Visser Centre
Visser Centre
Visser Centre

NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND

What you said: "AAAAAAAAAUUUUGH!" No, that's not Charlie Brown screaming after he misses the football for the 12 millionth time. It's me screaming after I lose another race in *Need for Speed Underground*. I don't care what you say, whether it's "You're just a wimp" or "You're not hardcore" or "That's what makes winning so special." They need to tone down the difficulty. I'm tired of making one mistake and losing the race because of it. This even happens on Easy difficulty. I've tried every single friggin' car in this race and I still lose. I've tried every method and yet still no results. Yes, it might be because I suck, but sucky gamers are people, too.

Also, some races rely completely on luck. That one car you can't see around the corner or the aftermath of another driver's wipeout can (and most of the time, will) make you lose the race. If only, if only they had incorporated a feature letting you see what was in front of you. However, considering all the good features in the game, how you can trick out your cars, and the good soundtrack, I can't help but give this game 3.5...err...octagons.

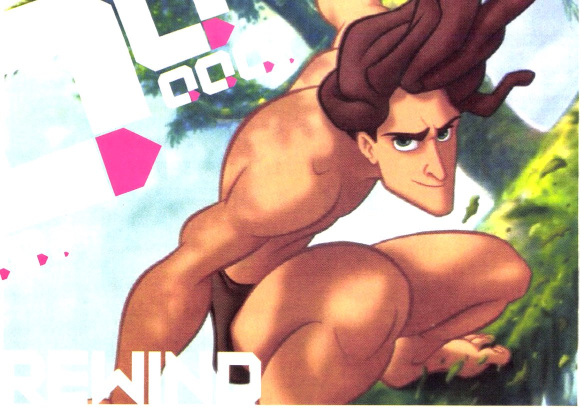
Your score: ●●●◖

Dcm714@aol.com

> "IT MIGHT BE BECAUSE I SUCK, BUT SUCKY GAMERS ARE PEOPLE, TOO."

What we said: "Rich with attitude and cool gizmos, the underground racing scene is the perfect playground for videogames, and EA has done a magnificent job bringing the spectacle to the PS2."

Our score: ●●●●◖



BUGS BUNNY
PlayStation

MONKEY SEE, MONKEY DO
Carrying over the jungle theme from the cover story (far left) was an in-depth strategy for *Ape Escape* (above). Huzzah!

FIVE YEARS INTO THE TERRIFYING PAST: AUGUST OF 1999

August of 1999. Look, let's just say it wasn't one of our proudest moments. We were in a lull between E3 and the holidays, and an even bigger lull between the first announcement of PS2 and the arrival of concrete game details. The result: *Tarzan.*

PlayStation
TARZAN
APE ESCAPE

JUNGLE LOVE

Yes, we know. Go ahead. Once you're all finished snickering, we'll continue. So as not to be too hard on ourselves, we must point out that *Tarzan* was one of the nicest-looking PS1 games at the time. A wholly adequate 2.5D platformer from the makers of the equally adequate *Hercules,* the game was also based on a Disney movie at a time when Disney movies were still sort of interesting. We'd like to move on now.

GUSHING GEORGE

One highlight of this issue was a piece written by Roger Ebert about an interview with George Lucas regarding the PlayStation 2. One of our favorite quotes: "I just finished this movie, which is kinda state-of-the-art, you know," says Lucas. "Nobody's been able to do some of these things. And we were sitting there being extremely proud of ourselves. And then they put this toy on the desk that is more powerful than anything we're using." Well...not quite, George. But close.

REVIEW HIGHLIGHTS

We reviewed nine games this month. Nine. If this wasn't our smallest Reviews section ever, it must have been pretty damn close. The highlight of the month was *R-Type Delta,* one of the deepest (and most challenging) shooters on PS1, with 4.5 discs. Also of note were *Bugs Bunny: Lost in Time, Jade Cocoon,* and *Chessmaster II,* which all earned 3.5 discs.

REVIEW LOWLIGHTS

At the bottom of the barrel was the worst soccer game we've ever played, *Alexi Lalas International Soccer,* which earned a devastating one disc. Only the ho-hum 2.5-disc *Konami Arcade Classics* approached its badness.

DEMO MADNESS

Normally, we take umbrage when people say they buy *OPM* for the disc, but in August of 1999, the disc was by far the most interesting part of the magazine, featuring a huge *Final Fantasy VIII* demo.

CHART TOPPERS

R4: Ridge Racer Type 4 debuted at the top of the charts. Meanwhile, *Syphon Filter, NF: High Stakes, Street Fighter Alpha 3,* and *Triple Play 2000* rounded out the top five. Ahh, not an *Army Men* game in sight. «

CAPTION CONTEST WINNER
"When he walked into the men's room, Jack realized, to his horror, that he'd had a scientist stuck between his teeth all evening." —Karen J. Hastings, USAF

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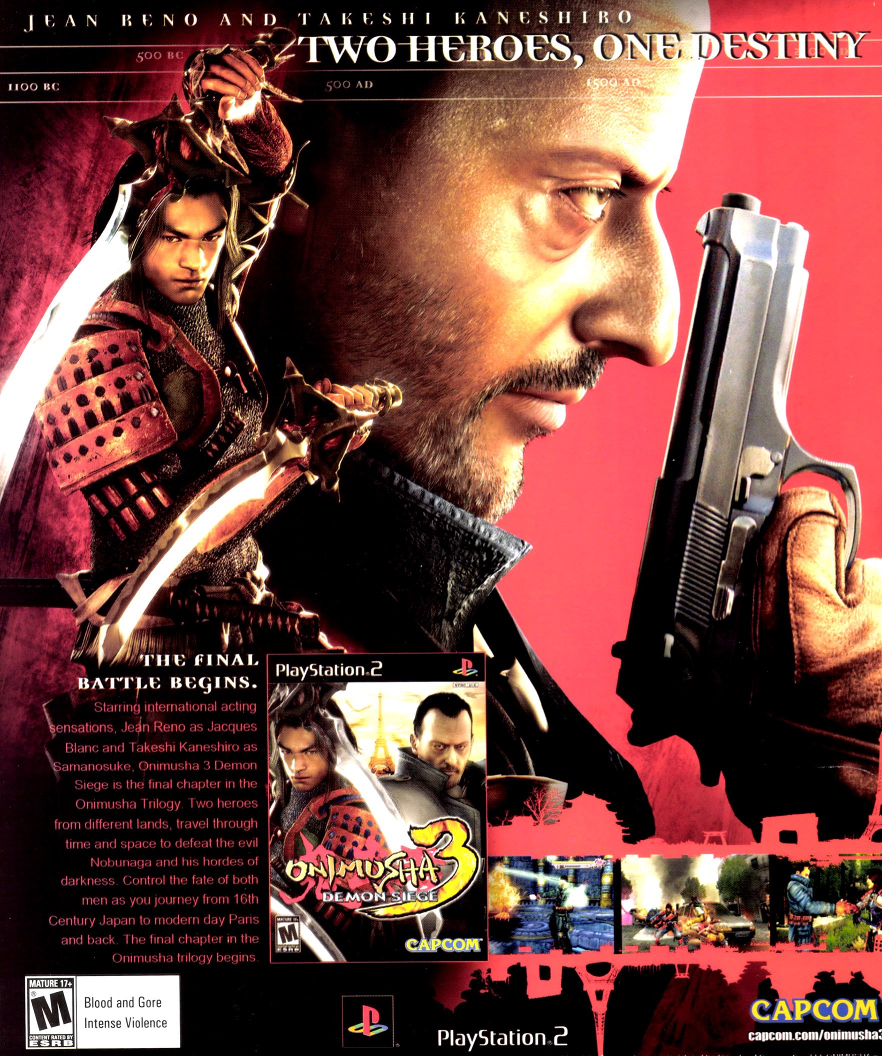
PlayStation.2 XBOX LIVE


JEAN RENO AND TAKESHI KANESHIRO
TWO HEROES, ONE DESTINY
500 BC
1100 BC
500 AD
1500 AD
PlayStation.2
ONIMUSHA 3
DEMON SIEGE
MATURE 17+
M
ESRB
CAPCOM

THE FINAL BATTLE BEGINS.

Starring international acting sensations, Jean Reno as Jacques Blanc and Takeshi Kaneshiro as Samanosuke, Onimusha 3 Demon Siege is the final chapter in the Onimusha Trilogy. Two heroes from different lands, travel through time and space to defeat the evil Nobunaga and his hordes of darkness. Control the fate of both men as you journey from 16th Century Japan to modern day Paris and back. The final chapter in the Onimusha trilogy begins.

MATURE 17+
M
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Blood and Gore
Intense Violence

PlayStation.2

CAPCOM
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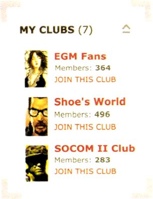


MY CLUBS (7)

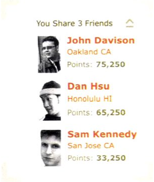
EGM Fans
Members: **364**
JOIN THIS CLUB

Shoe's World
Members: **496**
JOIN THIS CLUB

SOCOM II Club
Members: **283**
JOIN THIS CLUB

YOUR CLUBS

Make friends with other gamers - including us editors.



You Share 3 Friends

John Davison
Oakland CA
Points: **75,250**

Dan Hsu
Honolulu HI
Points: **65,250**

Sam Kennedy
San Jose CA
Points: **33,250**

YOUR FRIENDS

You've got a voice, let it be heard! Tell everyone what you're playing or doing.

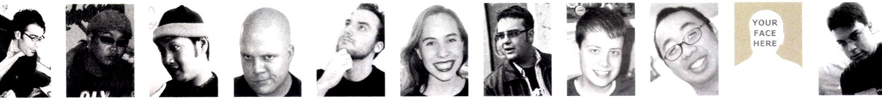
DAN'S 1UP JOURNAL

My day at the office

Tuesday, January 20, 2004 5:17 AM PERMALINK URL

Next generation Consoles

YOUR JOURNAL



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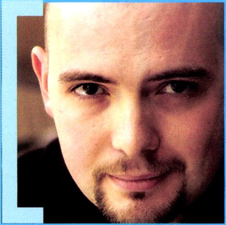
GAMES OF THE FUTURE

STORIES ARE OUT, QUICK FIXES ARE IN



There's a good reason that the *Madden* games sell over 2 million copies *every single year*, and it's not just because everyone loves football. You can pick up a sports game and play an *entire game* with as little or as much time investment as you choose. The gratification is instant, and you don't have to sit through 10 hours of horribly scripted narrative (see our exclusive *DRIV3R* review) to get to the climax. The days of desperately linear games are numbered, and the surge in urban themes has the potential to make this happen. As Marc Ecko tells us on page 40, "games require too much of a commitment; there's just too much media."

JOHN DAVISON

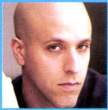
»THE OPM TRIBE«

DANA JONGEWAARD has been encouraging her husband to go exercise a lot more now that her house is down to one television, but somehow, he's seeing through her trickery. Now she's busy figuring out how to weight a quarter so she's guaranteed to win the coin toss that determines whose turn it is to play games.

JOE RYBICKI learned three very important life lessons at E3 last month: 1) Handheld game machines (like, for example, the PSP) tend to be very tightly attached to their display stands, 2) these display stands are impervious to attacks using pocket-sized all-in-one tools, and 3) so are handcuffs.

CHRIS BAKER felt a little overwhelmed at points during this issue as he focused on his huge *Madden/NCAA Football* feature blowout. But he kept his composure rating high and delivered a feature that should knock any football gamer back with the force of a crushing blow from the hit stick.

THIERRY NGUYEN claimed that he is "totally street" and proceeded to reorient his Heineken-label hat sideways, unbelt his pants so they would fall around his knees, queue up the tunes of Grandmaster Flash, and start beatboxing. Which is precisely why John ended up writing the Thug Life feature on page 40.



GIANCARLO VARANINI wants to punch Chris Webber in the neck now that his precious Sacramento Kings have been ousted from the playoffs. The only things that can take his mind off the devastating loss are a short stack of syrup-drenched pancakes and a picture of a lobster fighting a walrus.

BOB CONLON is learning about microclimates. In the city, where he works, the median summertime high is a crisp 68 degrees. At home, where his family is stuck all summer, the heat tops out at 105. They don't buy that "it's a dry heat" rationale he gives. So he tells them to stop whining, stay inside, and play *SSX 3*.

RYAN VULK hasn't been getting much sleep lately due to the evil minds behind *FFXI*. He never thought he would be this involved in a MMORPG. The other day when he withdrew money from the ATM, he screamed, "I should have 350,000 gil in my account!" then he realized he was in the real world and took out $20.

TINA HUYNH learned a sad fact about life this month: Never, ever ask your coworkers to feed your pet fish while you're in Hawaii. Away less than a week, Tina returned to the office to find her aquarium one fish short; her catfish, Vinnie, had died. Good-bye, Vinito—we hope you're in a better place.

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Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine (ISSN #1094-6683) is published monthly by Ziff Davis Media Inc., 28 East 28th Street, New York, NY 10016. Periodicals Postage Paid at New York, NY 10016 and additional mailing offices.
Single-issue rate: $8.99. Subscription Rates: One Year
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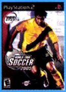
PlayStation
Issue 83
PLAY IT!
SIREN
INSIDE THE GAME
HARRY POTTER AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN
PLUS! GT4 TRAILER
TRACK
GRAN TURISMO 4
PLAY IT!
NBA BALLERS
SEE IT!
METAL GEAR SOLID 3 SNAKE EATER
PLUS! WORLD TOUR SOCCER 2005 • ULTIMATE MUSCLE • SERIOUS SAM: NEXT ENCOUNTER • AND MUCH MORE!

[PLAY IT!]

ALSO TRY...
There's no Tom Cruise or even Peter Graves, but *Mission: Impossible—Operation Surma*'s demo does offer a free sampling of sneaky spy action. Check it out—you might like it. And if you don't, then you'll know to save your money.

SIREN

We see dead people—in the form of zombies, or *shibito*, as they're known in this stylish horror game from Japan. Practice on the tutorial, and then sneak around the village in two missions.

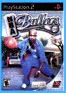


WORLD TOUR SOCCER 2005

The rest of the world (including our own Mr. Davison) calls it football, but we know better. Give the globe's most popular sport a whirl in this multilingual demo.

GALACTIC WRESTLING: FEATURING ULTIMATE MUSCLE

Big muscled dudes pulling fancy moves in exotic locales. No, it's not the Chippendales.



NBA BALLERS

Mad skillz, phat cribs, smokin' chicks—what else could you ask for in a basketball game? Perhaps a 7-foot-tall Chinese guy? Consider it done. Here's your chance to give versus mode a test run.

SERIOUS SAM: NEXT ENCOUNTER

Yes we like big guns and we cannot lie / And other gamers can't deny / That when kamikaze dudes without their heads / Get a barrel in their chest / They go splat

THE RED STAR

Explore an alternate reality as a magic-wielding agent with the Russian military. The darling of indie comics comes to gaming—check it out in the demo of this third-person shooter.

[WATCH IT!]

BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE!
Who's the biggest PlayStation fan? What's the latest *Gran Turismo* Track? Will a *DRIV3R*-inspired film include car chases? Get the answers to all these burning questions and more on this month's disc!

METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER

Ever wonder what your camouflage index would be if you were wearing olive drab with no face paint and crawling through tall, shaded grass? Wonder no more.

SAMURAI JACK: THE SHADOW OF AKU

We like samurai. We like sushi. We like game characters who are samurai and eat sushi. If your tastes match ours, then this game tip is your cup of tea.

MX UNLEASHED

What's a guy (or girl) to do when he (or she) lacks skill? Figure out a way to cheat! To start you on your way, here's a trick that guarantees the successful completion of Hit or Run challenges.

FATAL FRAME II: CRIMSON BUTTERFLY

If you own *Fatal Frame II* and you've got a memory card, then run, don't walk, to this download goodness to unlock costumes, modes, and mission select.

RISE TO HONOR

What's more fun than a barrel of monkeys? Nothing as far as we're concerned. *Rise to Honor* doesn't have barrels of monkeys, but it does have barrels that explode—and tricky ways to use them.

SERIOUS SAM

You've got better things to do than run around Via Aurelia looking for that secret—like finish this game so you can play the sequel. Conserve precious gaming time with the help of this video.

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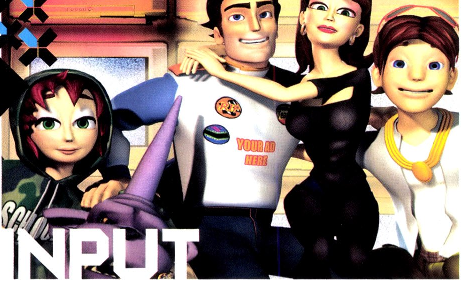

INPUT

LETTER OF THE MONTH

In your May issue, you ran an article about how prime-time television has seen a decline in male viewership ages 18-24 and how TV execs are looking to videogames as the culprit. So far, both of the major attempts we've seen to lure gamers back—UPN's *Game Over* and Spike TV's Video Game Awards—have failed. As for *Game Over*, I didn't find the show to be that funny, but if they had been allowed to flesh it out beyond six episodes, it might've come around.

It's a different story for Spike's Video Game Awards. Not once did Spike establish their credibility as an authority on videogames. Jenna Jameson was a nominee for Best Voice Actor for a five-minute role she played in *Vice City*. Why didn't we see Hedy Burress (Yuna of *FFX-2*) or Max Casella (Daxter of *Jak and Daxter*) nominated? Oh, that's right: because nobody knows who they are outside of the voice-acting industry. The same mentality carried over to every category. Spike claims they take games seriously, but the ceremony was tailored for a mainstream audience.

If UPN and Spike are intent on luring back gamers, then they need to rethink their strategy. If fake awards shows are the best they can do, there really is no reason to turn off our games.

Jerry Peterson and Pete Tobias
via e-mail

Is it possible to make a show that appeals to both gamers and nongamers? We're skeptical.

RANDOMIZE THIS

I am really worried about whether or not *Final Fantasy XII* will be worth the money after reading about its showing at E3 on 1UP.com and Penny Arcade. I'm especially worried about the battle system because it seems so different from what I'm used to. Is it just me or does it seem like Square is making too many changes to *FFXII*? I'm new to the *Final Fantasy* series, and I am hoping that you all could provide me with a little relief that this game won't suck since some of you have been big fans of the franchise from the start.

Frischcomp@aol.com

Since you're new to the series, let us clue you in to what appears to be a widely overlooked fact: Random battles suck. They suck ass. There is nothing worse than needing to travel from one town to another, only to get waylaid by monsters every three steps. We can't think of a single thing about random battles that wouldn't be made better by making the battles avoidable—except that they do tend to force you to level up. If you avoided every battle you came across, you'd be woefully underpowered when it came time to fight bosses that are central to the story. But in that situation, you could just go back out and *look* for enemies—instead of wandering around in circles praying for something to materialize and attack you.

HOPPED SCOTCH

I noticed in the new issue that there were no credits stating that Clish did the gossip column. Thank God, I was getting SO sick of that little dog's whining. She was always saying, "Oh, yeah, I predicted that rumor." Who cares? So many other gamers could predict a new game or a sequel is coming out anyway. So I would like to personally thank you for firing her ass.

Shane Harrison
via e-mail

It wasn't Clish's gloating that got to us, it was all that haggis stinking up the refrigerator during deadlines.

DOWN FOR THE COUNT

Well, the EA Sports cover jinx has claimed another victim. After gracing the cover of EA's boxing game *Fight Night*, Roy Jones Jr. fell victim to a big left from Antonio Tarver that not only knocked Jones senseless, but also knocked him into gaming folklore forever. And you thought NFL players were the only ones at risk!

Philip Gentles
via e-mail

Sad, but true. It's not only EA Sports games that seem to be cursed, though. Yes, Mike Vick (2004) and Marshall Faulk (2003) both suffered major injuries and Daunte Culpepper (2002) and Eddie George (2001) both suffered dismal seasons—all after being featured on the cover of a *Madden* game. But 989's games had a piece of the curse, too: *GameDay 2000* cover star Terrell Davis blew out his knee the next season. And Sega Sports' *NFL 2K2* star Randy Moss was arrested on drug charges *and* had the worst season of his career after showing his mug on the game. It's a wonder no sports-game publisher's been sued yet.

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PlayStation
RETURN TO ARMS
CHAMPIONS

GAMERS ARE TALKING ABOUT

STRAIGHT FROM THE OPM MESSAGE BOARD

Our monthly roundup of hot topics, gathered from the *OPM* message board at playstationmagazine.com.

E3 MUSINGS

"I thought E3 was where companies were supposed to drop some bombs and announce a few NEW games we didn't know about yet," says **ohJT-Behaaave**. "We got nothing, basically."

"It's time for the Guerrilla Games hype machine to come to a grinding halt right about...NOW," grumps **c_strife97**. "Both *Killzone* and *Shellshock* were varying degrees of suck. I actually played no less than 10 better shooters at the show, all of which had just a sliver of the hype of these two games."

xtremeskater3 is a bit more upbeat: "Hands, meet PSP. PSP, meet hands. You two will be VERY good friends for quite a long time."

EmperorXenoll is even more succinct: "PSP is God's gift to road gaming."

INSANITY?

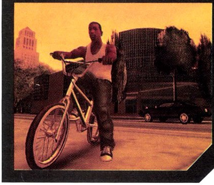
The Internet was abuzz with news of professional gamer Johnathan "Fatal1ty" (yes, that's the number 1 in there) Wendel being featured on ESPN. "During the interview, he stated that videogamers were just like athletes," says **Innervision**. "They train (or 'sit on their asses and play videogames') for hours and hours and compete just like real athletes. OK, sure, this is exactly what real sports athletes do, practice and compete, but in no way should gamers get the right to call themselves 'athletes.'"

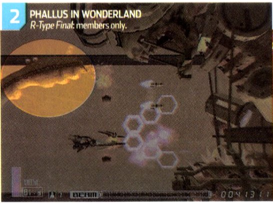
"Well, golfers are considered athletes," retorts **Evil_Mego**, "as are NASCAR drivers. Maybe nowadays the term 'athlete' can be used loosely."

SAN ANDREAS FAULTS

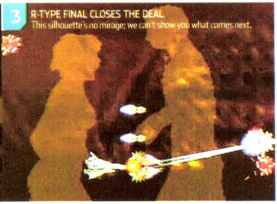
Response to the newest *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* screen has been mixed. "This just proves that *SA* is trying to add little tweaks here and there to slightly change the game rather than actually do something USEFUL to it," says **TheSoulTakerX**, "like improve the graphics...or get rid of the glitches...or any number of other BIG things that could have been done. Besides, WHO THE [expletive] WANTS TO RIDE A BIKE!?"

"Is the new trend of this board to make fun of *GTA*?" implores **Ocelot1138**. "I think we all know what this is about. You people are just racist. And I for one will not stand for hate toward nonexistent polygonal fictionized videogame characters." We're pretty sure he's kidding.





2 **PHALLUS IN WONDERLAND**
R-Type Final: members only.



3 **R-TYPE FINAL CLOSES THE DEAL**
This silhouette's no mirage; we can't show you what comes next.

RATED R-TYPE

After reading the "Smut Police" article about the ESRB rating system, I couldn't help but be reminded of the game *R-Type Final* (which is rated E). Certain areas in the game either depict "sexual-like things," or downright show sex. Here are a few things I have noticed:

1 Certain ships (like the *Amphibian*) that have the "beast" force shoot out spermlike projectiles that "swim" around the screen.

2 The boss on stage 4 has a phallic tongue, and the one on stage 6 has phallic openings.

3 And the granddaddy of them all: On the final stage, you have the silhouettes of a man and a woman in the background who at first are embracing each other, then move into several sexual positions as you play on (look it up if you don't believe me).

Is this something that was missed by the ESRB? Or was it something they DID notice but didn't think anyone else would?

Jason Acosta
via e-mail

Jason, that's just sick. That's just wrong. That's just... erm...wait a second, you're right. Guess we're just so pure and good that we never noticed such things until you pointed them out. Chalk it up to too much Pocari Sweat and tentacle porn on the part of the developers. As for the ESRB, it's very likely they never saw that final level; as you learned in our feature, they only get short portions of gameplay footage. Even if they had seen it, though, these images aren't exactly graphic—or obvious. Besides, sometimes a giant, tube-shaped space monster is just a giant, tube-shaped space monster.

UNSOLICITED TESTIMONIAL

Just wanted to comment on your Broken Promises section in Issue #81. I would like to say thanks for being open-minded enough to share not just all the upsides that come with being a dedicated game magazine but also the downs. So many promises get made by game companies and developers that seem to get swept under the carpet and forgotten. And yes, even though Sony may own the game market, even they are not perfect. As a proud owner of all the current-generation consoles and an avid reader of most U.S. game magazines, I believe that *OPM* is in a league of its own when it comes to being a dedicated game magazine. It is easy to see that *OPM*'s staff puts a lot of work into its magazine, and I just wanted to let you guys know some of us notice out there. P.S. I'm still getting paid for writing this, right? Just kidding.

Brian R.
via e-mail

Dude, you were NOT supposed to talk about the money in your letter. You get NOTHING. Naw, we're kidding. Thanks for the kind words. If anyone else has suggestions for future Broken Promises, send them to us with the subject line "BROKEN PROMISES."

NAUGHTY, NAUGHTY

I've been hearing tons of rumors about Naughty Dog and Insomniac working together on a top-secret videogame similar to *Ratchet & Clank* and *Jak*. Is this true? Because if it is, I'm gonna go nuts!!

Dillon Graves
via e-mail

GOING UNDERGROUND

SEE IT, PLAY IT, LOVE IT ON THE DEMO DISC

DRIV3 YOU CRAZY

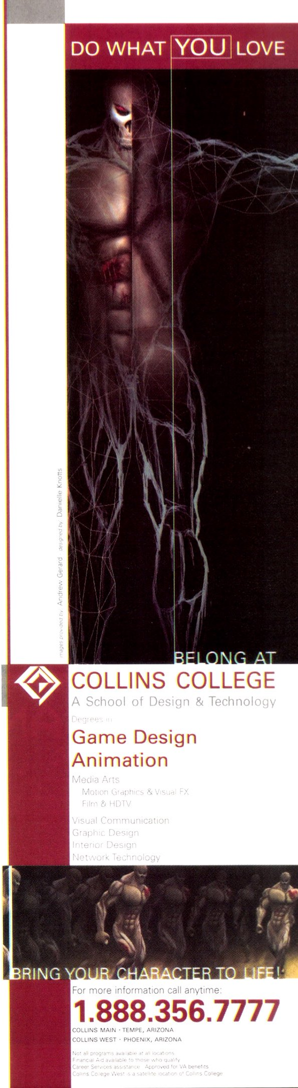
Overall, the Inside the Game section [of last month's disc] was a lot better than it usually is. The stuff in that section was more interesting than usual. The Extras section was cool with the Metreon thing (even though that happened like four months ago). And I liked the making-of for the *DRIV3R* commercial since that game will be the s---. [*Yeah, maybe not so much. Check out this month's review. –Ed.*] Plus, any info on *Gran Turismo 4* is always great.

tranquilizer
via the message board

FROLF RULES

Paperboy and *Ribbit King* are always welcome in my house. Other than that, I hope you guys will start rolling out some of those E3 demos and whatnot.

oralb808
via the message board



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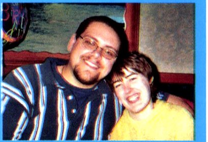

HE SAID: "I came to the *OPM* boards back in November of 2002. I noticed Cathy pretty quickly, but quickly labeled her as the 'popular' girl. It wasn't until months later that we started talking on more than a casual basis. The more we talked, the more I liked her. We moved from Gamers.com messages to Yahoo IMs and on to webcam. It wasn't long before I realized I was head over heels in love with her. For anyone who thinks love can't be found outside of your city limits and that the idea of falling in love with someone you met on a message board for gamers is crazy...we're here to prove you all wrong."

SHE SAID: "I showed up at the *OPM* board back in September of 2002, hoping to find the answer to a question I had about game demos. I love gaming and finding a place to talk about that was great. Keith showed up shortly after I did and it wasn't long before we were talking. I certainly never expected to find anyone on the boards, but the more I talked to him, the more I realized what a wonderful guy he was and how much we actually had in common. It wasn't too long after that, really, that we fell in love. I finally got to see him in person just recently for his birthday—and he proposed to me that night. The ring was absolutely beautiful and it fit perfectly, despite him not knowing my ring size. A year and a half ago I'd have never imagined this would be possible; now I couldn't even begin to imagine a life without him. I'm thankful every day that we both somehow found our way to the boards."

Keith "xxxGrimeyxxx" Nunn and Cathy "irishmalt" Lord
Engaged to be married on October 17, 2004

Congratulations, you two. Does this mean that Scooter gets to be the ring bearer? If you have a story about how *OPM* has affected your life, send it to opm@ziffdavis.com with the subject line "OPM CHANGED MY LIFE!"

We heard similar rumors, so we decided to ask Ted Price, president of Insomniac, about them. "Nope," he told us. "Insomniac is my home. Well, my home away from home—my wife would kill me if I didn't add that." You'll notice that he didn't exactly answer the question, though. Hmm....

A FRIEND LIKE BEN

This is my rat, Eddy. He loves videogames and likes to sit with me while I play them. He also loves *OPM*. Though he can't play any of my videogames, due to extremely small hands and a lack of opposable thumbs, he tries his best to help me through the hard parts via pointers and advice. Though he knows his games, he is, unfortunately, illiterate. Even if he can't read the column, I know he'd flip his lid if he saw himself in *OPM*.

Jon Kopacz
Jonk@rkcustom.com

Jon, we wouldn't dream of disappointing our powerful rodent demographic. We love all those furry little bucktoothed bastards. Except gerbils, which are just creepy. And giant, sewer-dwelling mutant rats who climb out of manholes in the middle of the night to gnaw on our tires. And Mickey Mouse, because of that one childhood incident we'd rather not talk about. Anyway, thanks for the photo!

MUSCLE MEMORIES

I was glad to see Giancarlo mention the '80s M.U.S.C.L.E. toys while reviewing *Galactic Wrestling: Featuring Ultimate Muscle* in Issue #82. I thought your readers might be interested to know that these little toys are not only fond '80s memories, but, of course, they have now become highly sought collectibles. I am the proud seller of (according to popular Internet forums on the topic) perhaps the most valuable M.U.S.C.L.E. ever! $422 isn't too bad for a 2-inch hunk of plastic. It might be worth a trip to your mom's attic to see if you have any of these guys lying around!

Eric Komroy
Buffalo, NY

Whoa, that's insane. To think all those little figures we stole—er, bought—would be worth millions if we hadn't thrown them away when we hit high school.

ASK US ANYTHING!

SERIOUSLY, ANYTHING

STUPID QUESTION OF THE MONTH

I think Tina Huynh is really hot. You think you guys can help a brother out and hook me up?
Fabian Scott
via e-mail

No way, dude—her boyfriend would kill us.

HIT PARADE

Q. **I noticed your Replay section is not up to date when it comes to Greatest Hits. *Jak and Daxter* has been a Greatest Hit for as long as I can remember, but have you guys updated that section? So I beg you, for all of us gamers that want to save a few bucks, please update the Greatest Hits list!**
Charlie Nielsen
via e-mail

A. We actually updated it a couple issues ago, but *Jak* slipped through the *craks*. (Ha! *Ahem*.) Anyway, it's fixed now.

DIAL-UP FANTASY

Q. **I know I am a few months behind, but I have a question about *Final Fantasy XI*. Now that I have the money for everything needed to enjoy *FFXI*, I would like to know how well the game plays with dial-up. I would be pissed off if I got everything and the damn thing lagged.**
dh88274@bellsouth.net

A. Other than taking practically *forever* to download the huge updates when you first install the game, it won't be that different of an experience from broadband. You may get some lag, sure, but so do some folks on broadband.

I BELIEVE I CAN'T FLY

Q. **Will PS2 ever have a "real" flight sim, like with Boeing and Cessna airplanes, etc...?**
Smitty in S.C.
via e-mail

A. Unfortunately, probably not. These are generally perceived as being too boring for us short-attention-span console gamers.

ANTISOCIAL

Q. **I was just wondering...does the game *Tribes Aerial Assault* support the headset?**
Victor Wong
via e-mail

A. Not only does *Tribes Aerial Assault* not support the headset, there's absolutely no way to talk to other players except through the generic (and annoying) preset sound bites. You can't even use a freakin' keyboard.

Tribes Aerial Assault

PLAYS FOR THE FAME

JOHNSON 04
Wizards
MAGIC The Gathering TRADING CARD GAME
INCLUDES PREMIUM CARD
AND MAGIC ONLINE
CORE GAME
TWO PLAYER GAME
DECKMASTER
MAGIC

This player is going to take his game to the top. All the way to the Magic: The Gathering® $1,000,000* Pro Tour.

This is where legends are born. Five annual, worldwide stops; each event with a prize pool of $200,000. It's where playing the world's best trading card game literally becomes a living. And getting started is easy.*

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Illustration by Dave Johnson. *Aggregate prizes awarded. For prize structure, go to http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=protour/sd04/facts

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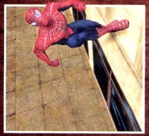
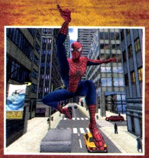
Available Now.

Do anything Spider-Man® can with breathtaking new moves and amazing combos.



Go anywhere and interact with anything.

Pick your own path: battle Doc Ock™, bust street crimes or clash with classic villains.



Swing through a living, highly detailed Manhattan.

Web swing for the first time from street to rooftop across the entire city.

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Violence

PC CD-ROM SOFTWARE

GAME BOY ADVANCE

PlayStation 2

XBOX

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

MARVEL

SPIDER-MAN

COLUMBIA PICTURES

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TREYARCH

ACTIVISION

activision.com

HYPE

CONTENTS

32 **METAL GEAR CINEMA**
Play-by-play of the latest trailer, plus more on Acid and comic book fun.

40 **THUG LIFE**
Developers think you're street, and they want you to think they are too.

50 **ALL EYES ON PSP**
They're excited, they're afraid—developers talk about the PSP.

54 **PRINCE OF PERSIA 2**
His pants are no longer baggy, and now he chops off people's heads.

56 **KING ARTHUR**
Chase after Keira Knightley.

60 **KEYS TO THE KINGDOM**
Tetsuya Nomura brings Mickey out of hiding for *Kingdom Hearts II*.

62 **ONLINE-O-RAMA**
Start exercising your Network Adaptor because it's about to get a real workout.

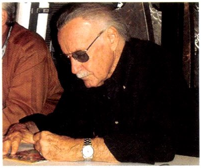
68 **ANIMEXPLOSION**
Cowboy Bebop and *Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex* on your PS2.

72 **THE LIST**
Gadgets, toys, and everyone's favorite metal band in group therapy.

74 **BY THE NUMBERS**
The page that counts.

ELECTRONIC PLAYGROUND

STUFF WE LIKED, STUFF WE DIDN'T—THE ELECTRONIC ENTERTAINMENT EXPO REDUX



E3 BY THE NUMBERS

4	days
10	years of E3
400	exhibitors
5,000	products
65,000	attendees
540,000	square feet of exhibit space

OUR E3 2004 PICKS

Eight great games, and one thing that might change your life.

PSP (SONY CEA)

Everything we hoped for, and more.

RATCHET & CLANK: UP YOUR ARSENAL (SONY CEA)

It's like *Halo* with robot squirrels and demon snowmen. See page 64 for more details.

PRINCE OF PERSIA 2 (UBISOFT)

Graphics that will make your eyes bleed. Check out page 54.

FINAL FANTASY XII (SQUARE ENIX)

No. Random. Battles. Learn to deal with it.

BLACK (CRITERION)

What *Burnout* would be, if it were a first-person shooter.

GOD OF WAR (SONY CEA)

An early entry for Game of the Year 2005.

GRAN TURISMO 4 (SONY CEA)

Every time we see it, they've added something new to it.

STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT (LUCASARTS)

All your *Star Wars* gameplay dreams in one place. See our online games preview on page 62.

DEF JAM FIGHT FOR NY (EA GAMES)

Street fighting done exceptionally well.

GRAN TURISMO 4
GRAN TURISMO 4 MOBILE
PSP

BIGGEST SURPRISE

The Last Job (Acclaim): Think *Ocean's Eleven: The Game*. Only there are four of you. So, er, *Ocean's Four*.

METAL GEAR SOLID 3
SNAKE EATER

NOT QUITE WHAT WE EXPECTED...

DEAD RUSH (ACTIVISION)

GTA with zombies. Er, no thanks.

THE GETAWAY: BLACK SUNDAY (SONY CEA)

Proving that gritty usually just means miserable and humorless.

KILLZONE (SONY CEA)

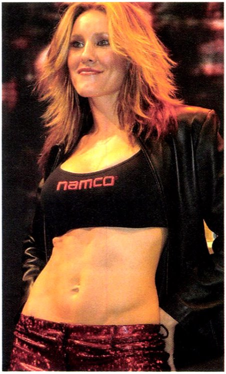
Where were all the cool online modes we were promised? Not at E3.

CATWOMAN (EA GAMES)

Everything about it both sucks and blows at the same time.

KILLZONE
PS2

SQUARE ENIX



1UP.com BEST OF E3 AWARDS

Voted on by the editors of www.1UP.com, and the *Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine, Electronic Gaming Monthly, GMR, Computer Gaming World,* and *Xbox Nation.*

GAME OF THE SHOW

Final Fantasy XII (Square Enix)

BIGGEST SURPRISE

Metal Gear Acid (Konami)

BEST VIDEO

Tekken 5 (Namco)

BEST PRESENTATION

Splinter Cell 3 (Ubisoft)

BEST PS2 GAME

Final Fantasy XII (Square Enix)

BEST ACTION GAME

Ratchet & Clank: Up Your Arsenal (Sony CEA)

BEST ADVENTURE GAME

Prince of Persia 2 (Ubisoft)

BEST FIGHTING GAME

Mortal Kombat: Deception (Midway)

BEST RACING GAME

Burnout 3 (EA Games)

BEST RPG

Final Fantasy XII (Square Enix)

BEST SPORTS GAME

Madden NFL 2005 (EA Sports)

BEST WRESTLING GAME

Def Jam Fight for NY (EA Games)

BEST EXTREME SPORTS GAME

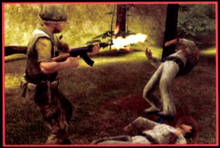
THUG2: World Destruction Tour (Activision)

BEST OVERALL LINEUP

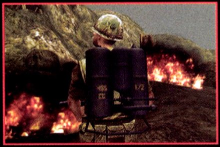
Electronic Arts

Forget Medals.
Forget Honor.
Just Survive.

It's 1967. You've been drafted to fight in the most controversial conflict of modern times. Prepare to experience the fear, chaos and atrocities of the Vietnam War. From napalm bombardments to deadly VC booby traps, can you survive your first tour of duty?



Unnerving realism. A graphically harrowing depiction of the terror of war.



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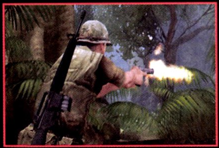

"We've never seen a more realistic war game." - PSM

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M
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
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Sexual Themes
Strong Language
Use of Drugs

XBOX
PlayStation®2
eidos
GUERRILLA

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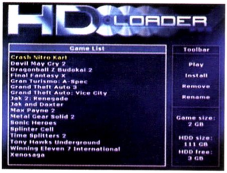
HARD COPY

HD LOADER ADDS NEW FUNCTIONALITY TO PS2 HARD DRIVE

While ***Final Fantasy XI,*** downloadable content, and extra save-game storage already make the hard drive an attractive package, a new company called HD Loaders may be offering an extra reason to rush out and buy the device. Its product is called, appropriately enough, the HD Loader, and its main function is pretty straightforward. It basically lets you install an entire game on the official PS2 hard drive or any other type of IDE compatible drive so that you don't have to pop games in and out to play them. But you still have to use the HD Loader disc to navigate the menu that contains the list of games on your hard drive.

HD Loaders promises faster load times, as well as 95 percent compatibility with PlayStation 2 games—only four games don't work with the product at the moment. Of course, the device promises something else, like the ability to copy rented games or backups. Naturally, the company doesn't endorse such acts, nor will it even discuss the matter on its website or through e-mail, but the potential for pirating is still there. Unfortunately, SCEA wouldn't comment on the HD Loader or its capabilities since "it's not an official SCEA product," but you can bet your sweet ass you'll be hearing more about it in the coming months. «

THE DEVICE PROMISES SOMETHING ELSE, LIKE THE ABILITY TO COPY RENTED GAMES OR BACKUPS.



BAD PIRATES

It is estimated that worldwide piracy cost game companies $3.2 billion in 1998 alone, something which makes most of them pretty darn unhappy.

DATA STREAM

SOLID GOJIRA

Metal Gear Solid character and mechanical designer Yoji Shinkawa is working on the upcoming *Godzilla* film. He's responsible for the design of the Earth Defense Force costume as well as the battleship *Atragon.*

DAREDEVIL DEFEATED

Fans of Daredevil will have to wait much longer for the videogame adaptation of his adventures. Encore Software canceled the project to cut costs, though the company already sank $4.3 million into development of the game.

ENGAGE

Wil Wheaton, the actor behind everyone's favorite *Star Trek: The Next Generation* character, may be providing voice work for *Twisted Metal: World Tour*—presumably the name for the *Twisted Metal* PSP game. Captain Picard would be proud.

ZOE FLOWER

THE POWER OF ONE (AND TWO, THREE, FOUR...)

ZOE FLOWER
aka "Gamer Girl," creates TV programs and music videos, and looks good doing it. See the details at www.zoeflower.com.

Listen up. I've got a lot on my mind this month after having plenty of time post-E3 to digest the behemoth plate of gaming goodness on hand this year. These days I'm feeling extremely conflicted—and not because I didn't understand most of the *MGS3* demo at E3! It might be just me, but my game collection is starting to sound a lot like a Sly Stallone movie collection, rife with twos, threes, fours, and even fives these days (yes, anything using a date also counts as a sequel). Initially, I felt ripped off at this realization—after all, movie sequels generally suck, so the stigma is already in place when it comes to another iteration of *Tony Hawk* or *Devil May Cry*. Good. Fine. Death to all sequels! I'm boycotting them all!

Alas, after checking out the latest sins of Dante, kicking it with the ol' Prince of Persia, then revisiting Sly, Jak, Ratchet, and Snake, a happy little lightbulb blinked in my brain. All these sequels are actually good! No, not just good. They are better than their predecessors. Watch as I dislodge my sparkly painted toes from my mouth. I take it back. I love sequels! Give me more!

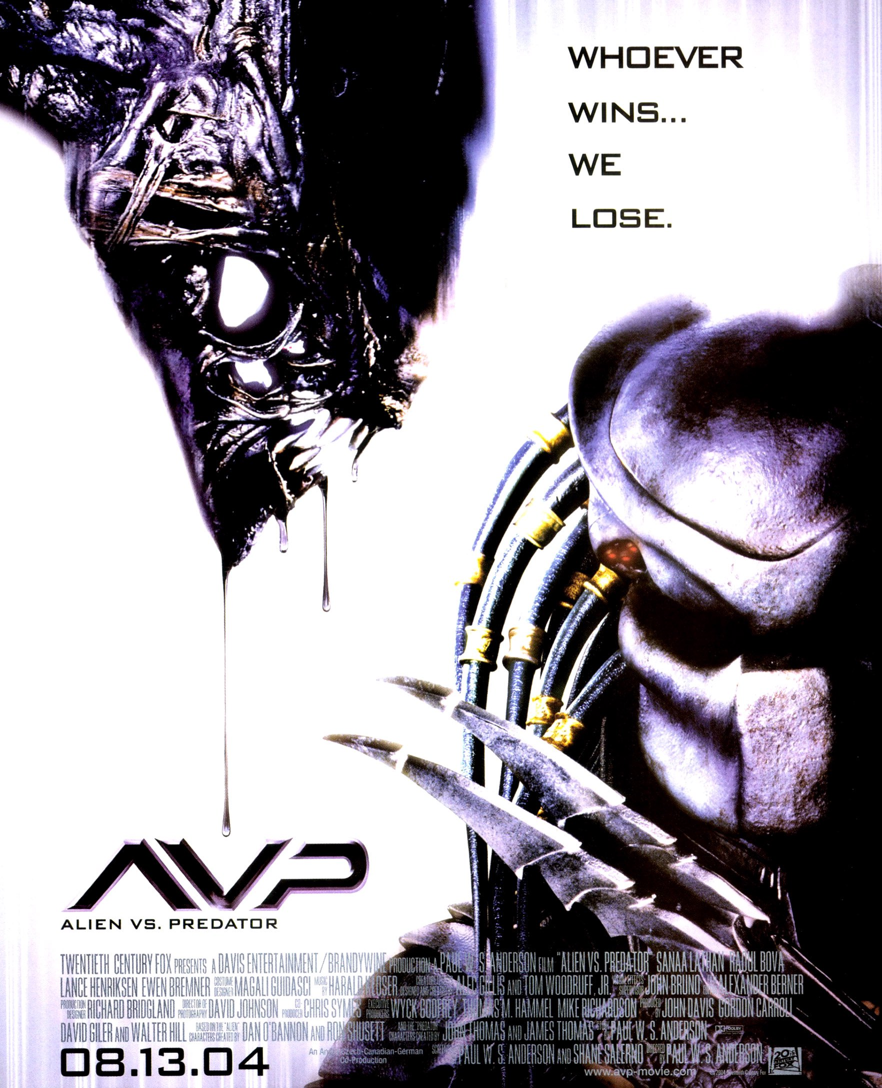
OK, so why the feelings of confusion, you ask? Forget all the moaning about publishers taking fewer risks, hedging their bets on proven franchises, and building empires on our brand loyalty. This I can live with if the games tickle me silly! Who cares about a pesky little digit tacked on the end of a title? Besides, isn't that better than having to learn to say *Xenosaga Episode II: Jenseits von Gut und Bose*? (Actually, that's fun to say three times fast....)

But something is still nagging me. I recently sampled a little game called *God of War*. Yep, that's it. Three simple syllables. No numeric follow-up. No colons. No hyphens. And whilst many were swept up in *Final Fantasy* double digits or getting up to speed with *GT4*, *Tekken 5*, and *Silent Hill 4*, I couldn't take my hands off this little gem. Granted, *Clash of the Titans* is one of my all-time favorite movies, and I dig mythology, but I don't recall the last time I had such unadulterated FUN with a game! I became *God of War's* biggest fan in 15 minutes flat—somewhere between brutally beheading Medusa, then using her head to turn enemies to stone and using an old track-and-field sprint technique to slay a Minotaur. I was so excited that I squealed multiple times while playing, which may have scared some people off. So I have since made it my mission to get this game noticed (thus frightening many other unsuspecting journalists with my high-pitched evangelism).

So now you see my conflict. I can fully appreciate some the cool sequels coming up and don't remember the last time there were so many games I really genuinely couldn't wait to rip into. But in a sea of gaming powerhouses, how can the little guy get noticed? I just can't help but wonder how many other impressive first outings have flown so low on the radar that they had no choice but to crash and burn in anonymity. For my part, I'm going to make sure this game gets a fighting chance by making some noise. Say it with me: *GOD. OF. WAR.* Remember it.

I guess I'll know if I've succeeded if we see *God of War II* come 2006. «

WATCH AS I DISLODGE MY SPARKLY PAINTED TOES FROM MY MOUTH.



AVP
ALIEN VS. PREDATOR

TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX PRESENTS A DAVIS ENTERTAINMENT / BRANDYWINE PRODUCTION A PAUL W. S. ANDERSON FILM "ALIEN VS. PREDATOR" SANAA LATHAN RAOUL BOVA LANCE HENRIKSEN EWEN BREMNER COSTUME DESIGNER MAGALI GUIDASCI MUSIC BY HARALD KLOSER CREATURES DESIGNED AND CREATED BY ALEC GILLIS AND TOM WOODRUFF, JR. VISUAL EFFECTS SUPERVISOR JOHN BRUNO EDITOR ALEXANDER BERNER PRODUCTION DESIGNER RICHARD BRIDGLAND DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY DAVID JOHNSON CO-PRODUCER CHRIS SYMES EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS WYCK GODFREY THOMAS M. HAMMEL MIKE RICHARDSON PRODUCED BY JOHN DAVIS GORDON CARROLL DAVID GILER AND WALTER HILL BASED ON THE "ALIEN" CHARACTERS CREATED BY DAN O'BANNON AND RON SHUSETT AND THE "PREDATOR" CHARACTERS CREATED BY JOHN THOMAS AND JAMES THOMAS STORY BY PAUL W. S. ANDERSON SCREENPLAY BY PAUL W. S. ANDERSON AND SHANE SALERNO DIRECTED BY PAUL W. S. ANDERSON

An Anglo-Czech-Canadian-German Co-Production

08.13.04

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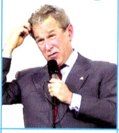
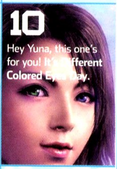
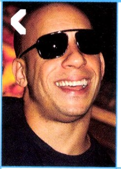
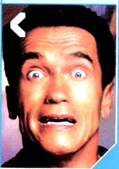
JULY 2K4

THE MONTH AHEAD FOR YOU AND YOUR PLAYSTATION 2

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
July is **National Ice Cream Month**. We mean real ice cream, not that soft serve crap or Dippin' Dots, the ice cream of the future. 	Down Under rockers **Jet** will be working overtime this month, playing 21 concerts across the U.S. They start in Niagara Falls and wind up the month here in San Francisco. Find out if you can see 'em at www.jettheband.com.		At press time, there were only 10 PS2 games scheduled to ship in July. This compares to last November, when there were over 60 releases. If we made a game, we'd ship it now instead of letting it get lost on the shelves later (hint).		2 You pervs are running out of underage cuties to lust after. **Lindsay Lohan** is legal now. Who's left on your countdowns, that little girl from *8 Mile* and *The Cat in the Hat*?	3
4 It's **Independence Day.** Play it safe with the M-80s. Remember, you can't use your PS2 if you blow off your hand. We fully realize we just opened ourselves up to unwanted pics of you guys proving us wrong.		6 Guess which birthday boy is older: **A.** George W. Bush **B.** Sylvester Stallone **C.** Neither C. They are both 58.	7 The game may still be four months off, but ***King Arthur,*** starring ultra-fox superhottie **Keira Knightley,** hits the megaplexes today.	8 It's **National Video Games Day.** A day? It at least deserves its own month. Too bad July is reserved for ice cream.	9 Will **Will Ferrell** keep his comedy hot streak alive in ***Anchorman,*** which is in theaters today? Yes. How much does typing Will Will at 11:00 p.m. on deadline make us laugh? A lot. Are we pathetic? Yes.	10 Hey Yuna, this one's for you! It's Different Colored Eye Day. 
11 It's **Nude Recreation Week.** Think about that as you're playing *SOCOM* online against undrwr_h8r.	12 ***Karaoke Rev. Vol. 2*** is out. *OPM*'s **Joe Rybicki** looks nothing like the Darkness' lead singer, but he's performed "I Believe in a Thing Called Love" so much that he sounds scarily like him.	13 One month until the Summer Olympics. Get those thumbs in shape by training with ***Athens 2004***. Also out today: ***Combat Elite: WWII Paratroopers*** and ***Crimson Tears.*** [NEW GAMES]	14 Sure, it's the middle of summer and the **MLB All-Star Game** was yesterday, but EA thinks you're ready for some ***NCAA Football 2005***. Check out page 88 to see if C-Bake dug it.		16 Once upon a time, **Will Smith** ruled the B.O. on July 4th weekends. A couple sequel duds later and his latest, ***I, Robot,*** gets pushed to the middle of the month. Watch the trailer on this month's disc.	17
18 We were all excited earlier in the year when **Vin Diesel,** turning 37 today, got into the videogame biz. Unfortunately, we didn't say he was a smart businessman. He's not releasing ***Chronicles of Riddick*** on PS2. Jerk.		20	21	22	23 We love **Halle Berry** and think she's one of God's most beautiful creations, but she has some serious lapses in judgment. Case in point, ***Catwoman.*** See page 48 for nine reasons to avoid it.	24
25	26 ***Street Fighter Anniv. Collection*** and ***Echo Night Beyond*** are out tomorrow. It's as if all the publishers colluded to release crappy games this month to get you to play outside. [NEW GAMES]	27 Been waiting all month for that must-have game to get you through the dog days of summer? My friend, look no further than ***Dog's Life.***	28 	29 What ever happened to that XFL videogame that was supposed to come out? **Spike Lee** wants to know. His movie ***She Hate Me*** comes out tomorrow.	30 All our '80s action heroes are getting older this month. California governor **Arnold Schwarzenegger** is 57.	

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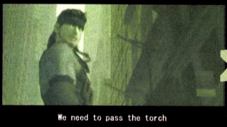
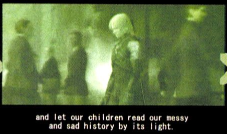
METAL GEAR CINEMA

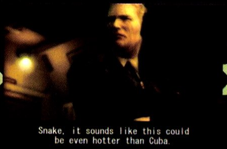
WE BREAK DOWN THE NEW MGS3 TRAILER FOR YOU


We need to pass the torch

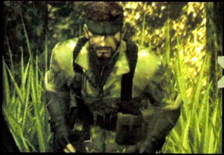
00:15 The first visual in the current trailer is of Snake in the modern day talking to...


and let our children read our messy
and sad history by its light.

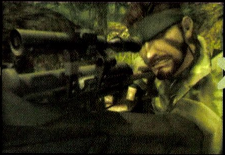
00:17 ...Raiden. Snake is talking about history and passing on genes and memes, a predominant theme in *MGS3*.


Snake, it sounds like this could
be even hotter than Cuba.

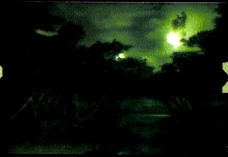
1:04 The new Colonel Campbell, "Major Tom," confirms the '60s setting, since he refers to Khrushchev, LBJ, and the Cuban missile crisis in the present tense.



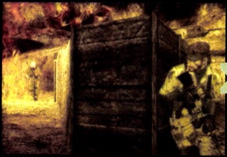
4:16 Snake is stalking some guys in the grass. This is the first appearance of his bandanna, which completes his look.



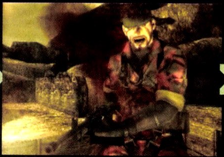
4:36 Snake uses his expert sniping skills to take out four guys at once. So far, the game doesn't have any surprises...



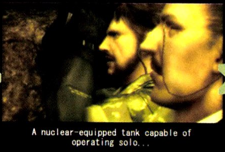
5:07 ...except for this first glimpse of some never-before-seen hovercraft searching for Snake at night.



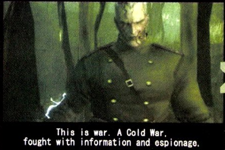
8:54 Snake narrowly avoids some flamethrower-wielding guys burning up some mysterious trenches.



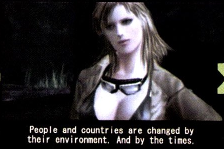
9:05 Making full use of his camouflage's fire pattern, Snake takes out the flamethrowers and kills Ocelot's guards—the action/sneaking part of the *MGS3* trailer ends.


A nuclear-equipped tank capable of
operating solo...

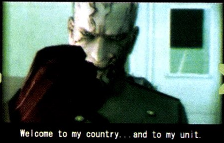
10:09 Snake and Sokolov spy something in the distance, and they discuss Sokolov's current project and its ramifications.


This is war. A Cold War,
fought with information and espionage.

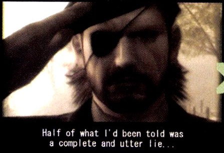
11:02 The Colonel speaks for the first time. His first line concerns information warfare, another big theme in the *MGS* series.


People and countries are changed by
their environment. And by the times.

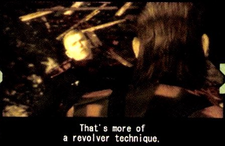
11:09 Whoa! Who's this?! And why is she wearing only a jumpsuit and a bra? Nobody knows, but she does kind of look like Meryl, hmm....


Welcome to my country... and to my unit.

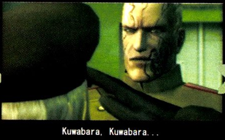
11:38 The Colonel lays a savage beatdown on Snake. Up to this point, Snake has been a total badass, but the Colonel is now the one delivering the business.


Half of what I'd been told was
a complete and utter lie...

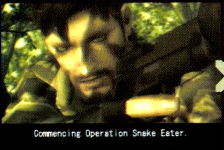
13:37 Back to the hazy sequence, where we see an eye patch, which gives further indication that this is Big Boss. So, in that case, are these his memories?


That's more of
a revolver technique.

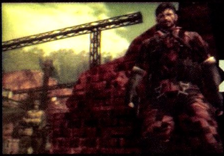
13:56 "Snake" tells Ocelot that he should switch from using automatic pistols to revolvers, due to the way he holds his gun.


Kuwabara, Kuwabara...

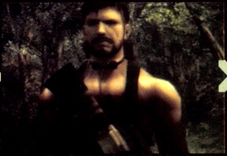
14:25 Huh? We have no idea what "Kuwabara" means. Some people tell us it's "eeny-meeny-miney-mo," others say it means "nancy." It might involve research on bees. You tell us!



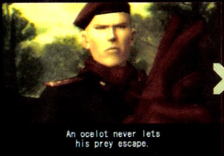
2:42 Snake's mission is to infiltrate Tselinoyarsk and extract Sokolov, a Soviet scientist who wants to defect to the United States.



3:16 Snake starts sneaking around, killing fools left and right, and using camouflage. Note that he doesn't have his trademark bandanna on yet, hmm....



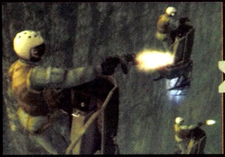
3:39 Snake wades through a river and emerges covered in leeches. Will this affect gameplay?



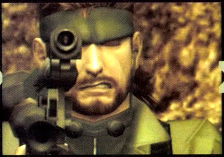
5:37 A man from the "Ocelot" unit of the Spetsnaz shows up and with just a pistol kills six soldiers. Who could this be?

CAMO CRAZY

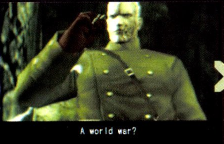
You'll have to wait until next month before you can pop in an *OPM* DVD and watch the trailer in its full cinematic glory on your television. On the DVD this month is Kojima's presentation on the importance of camouflage, which really is a big part of *MGS3*. Thanks to the camouflage index, the entire game world is now a potential hiding spot. One only has to go into a menu (that also lists inventory and food) to switch camouflage on-the-fly. Konami is also holding a contest where gamers can submit camouflage patterns to be available for download off the Internet. Now's the time to get working on your rubber-ducky camouflage!



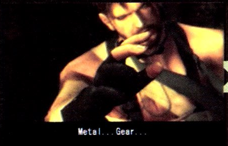
7:07 What the...?! It's those hovering guys again! Snake takes them out with a stationary machine gun.



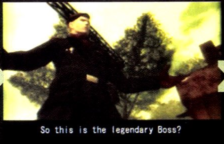
8:26 Using the handy rocket launcher nearby, he then takes out a helicopter. Note that Snake's mullet now peeks out from beneath his bandanna.



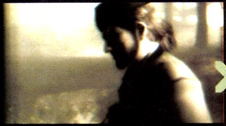
10:29 The first appearance of the enigmatic "Colonel," as Sokolov states that this Colonel wants to start WWIII using Sokolov's project, which is aptly called...



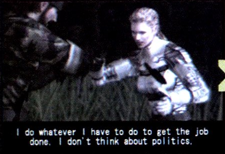
10:43 ..."Metal Gear," since it is the figurative gear that falls between the infantry and the artillery by being a highly mobile nuclear missile system.



10:59 Further fueling speculation, Ocelot directly refers to an offscreen character as "Boss." But whom is he talking to?



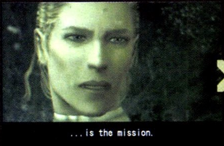
12:09 Whoa, everything looks hazy (a dream sequence?), and now Snake is sporting both a luxuriant mullet and a dress uniform.


I do whatever I have to do to get the job
done. I don't think about politics.

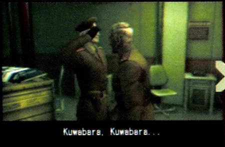
12:25 An older woman (different than Bra Girl) delivers another smackdown on Snake while telling him about the nature of patriotism and loyalty. Who is she?

METAL GEAR ACID

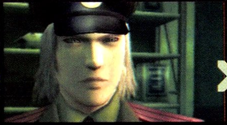
The biggest surprise is that the *Metal Gear* game for PSP isn't a tiny tactical-espionage action title: It's a card-using turn-based game! The demo for *MGA* is oh-so-brief and shows Snake performing his signature moves during each turn and occasionally using cards. The cards are analogues to the weapons found in the normal game, like silenced pistols and mines and whatnot. Konami hasn't even told us when *MGA* takes place. Stay tuned for more news as we get it.



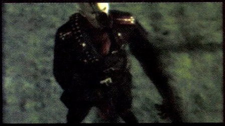
13:24 An anonymous Konami rep tells us that this is "Boss," the woman who taught Snake everything he knows, and, hence, is able to completely regulate him when need be.



14:34 The Colonel then proceeds to grab this recruit in the groinal area. This is part of Kojima's quirky sense of humor.



14:37 Oddly enough, this recruit looks a whole lot like Raiden. Curiouser and curiouser....



14:50 The last shot is of Ocelot juggling three revolvers. Wacky! Zany! Nonsense!

METAL GEAR SOLID: THE COMIC BOOK

WATCH OUT FOR IT IN SEPTEMBER

If you're a comic book fan, chances are you're aware of the significance of Ashley Wood illustrating the new *Metal Gear* series for IDW. Known for his dark, angular paintings that meld traditional techniques with digital photography, his work has been seen in books from every major publishing company. Essentially the poster child for dark, angular paintings as both covers and interiors in modern comics, he carries the torch for the kind of work pioneered by Dave McKean and Bill Sienkiewicz. Probably most famous for his *Spawn* covers, Wood is providing all of the art for the upcoming *MGS* series. We got him to put down his tools long enough to answer some probing questions.

OPM As far as you know, is this an entirely new story or an interpretation of one of the games?

ASHLEY WOOD It starts with the first *Metal Gear Solid* and goes from there.

OPM Kojima tells us that he's a big admirer of yours. Were you approached for this project, or did you ask to be on it?

AW When [president of IDW] Ted Adams told me he was interested in publishing a *Metal Gear Solid* comic, I put my hand up. Well, truth is, I threatened to plant a slug in his frontal lobe unless I got the gig. Kojima liked my art, so it all went well. Lucky for Adams.

OPM Were there any strict rules or guidelines you had to follow?

AW Make it feel *MGS*! Make it feel *MGS*! And rightly so.

OPM How does your work on *MGS* compare with your previous work (like *Popbot*)?

AW Mmm, well *Metal Gear Solid* is an important book for me. I admire [its] creators, so I'm trying to raise myself up to what they've done. I don't really think, "Hmm, this is *MGS*; ahh, this is *Popbot*." I'm just trying to create the best possible work at any given time.

OPM Most art for game-based comics is very traditional. Yours is looser and abstract. Will your art for *MGS* look a little more traditional?

AW Well anyone that's seen Yoji Shinkawa's design work for *Metal Gear* will know it is edgy, shadow-driven, and very expressive in its nature. It's also brilliant. I am the same. [*Laughs*] But seriously, it's very close to the game, with my style added in. I'm following the original materials and the game. Long answer short: not abstract, but with abstract *moments*.

OPM Since Kris Oprisko is handling the script, do you get to work with Kojima at all?

AW When working on *Metal Gear Solid*, it's all Kojima; Kris and me are but his left and right hands. His ideas and influence are always there.

OPM What is it about *MGS* that drew you to this project?

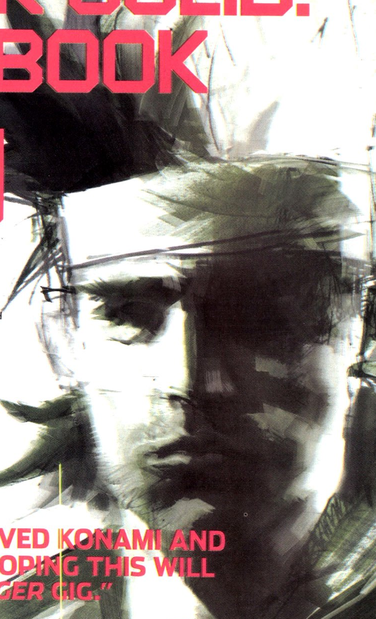
AW I've always loved Konami and *MGS*, love the Yoji stuff. Plus, I'm hoping that this will lead to a *Frogger* gig. Fingers crossed!

OPM Do you play any games? Do you have any particular favorites, besides *MGS*?

AW I'm very fond of older games like *Salamander*, the arcade version of *R-Type*, and *Nemesis*.

OPM What's your favorite scene in an *MGS* game?

AW From *Snake Eater*, where Snake emerges from the river wearing a crocodile head. Game gold I tells ya, game gold. «

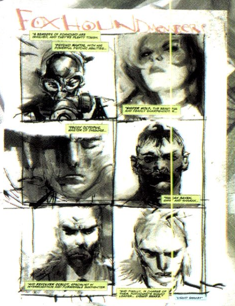


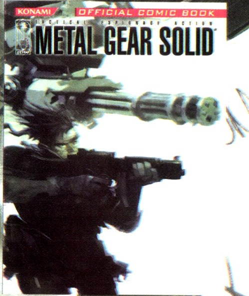
"I'VE ALWAYS LOVED KONAMI AND *MGS*. PLUS, I'M HOPING THIS WILL LEAD TO A *FROGGER* GIG."

MULLETS GALORE!

Snake's luxuriant mullet is coming back in style! While Mel Gibson and Kevin Bacon don't have mullets anymore, many people still sport them—here are some handy nicknames:

- Business in the Front, Party in the Back
- Camaro Cut
- Canadian Passport
- Kentucky Waterfall
- Missouri Compromise
- Mudflap
- Tennessee Top Hat
- Yep-Nope


FOXHOUND MEMBERS
"6 MEMBERS OF FOXHOUND ARE INVOLVED, AND THEY'RE PLENTY TOUGH.
"PSYCHO MANTIS, WITH HIS POWERFUL PSYCHIC ABILITIES...
"SNIPER WOLF, THE BEAUTIFUL AND DEADLY SHARPSHOOTER...
"DECOY OCTOPUS, MASTER OF DISGUISE...
"VULCAN RAVEN, GIANT AND SHAMAN...
"AND REVOLVER OCELOT, SPECIALIST IN INTERROGATION AND FORMIDABLE GUNFIGHTER.
"AND FINALLY, IN CHARGE OF THEM, FOXHOUND'S SQUAD LEADER... LIQUID SNAKE."
"LIQUID SNAKE"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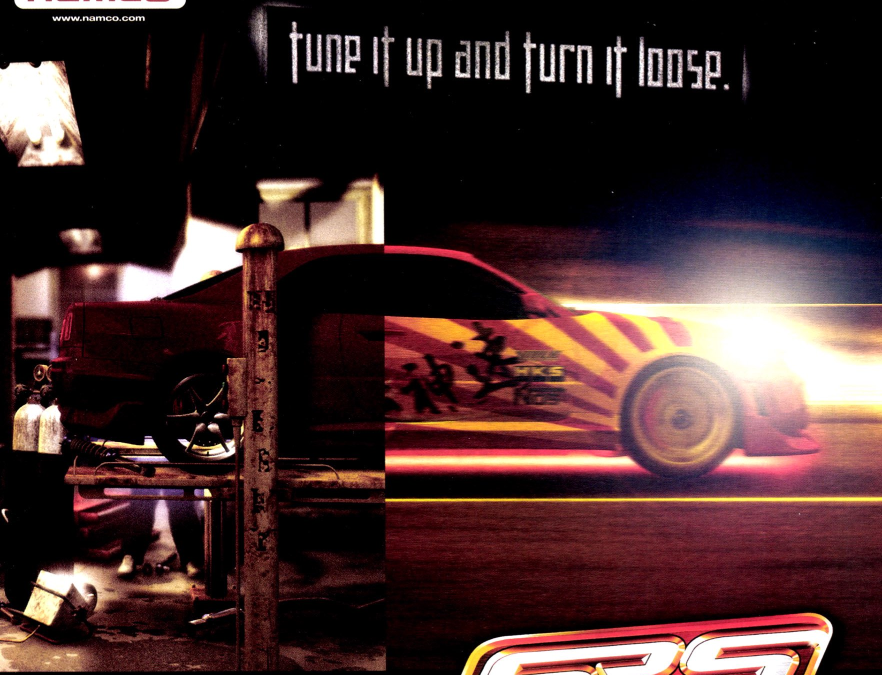
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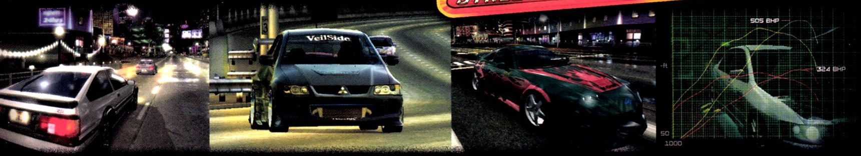

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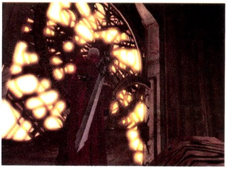

STYLISH CRAZY ACTION

CAPCOM'S TSUYOSHI TANAKA FILLS US IN ON *DEVIL MAY CRY 3*

We'll admit that we a have bit of a soft spot for Tsuyoshi Tanaka. Sure, he may have served as producer on *Devil May Cry 2* and *Resident Evil Outbreak*—two of Capcom's most disappointing releases in recent memory—but as gaming journalists, we respect his move from a Japanese videogame mag into such a prominent role in development. Despite these previous letdowns, Capcom continues to instill the utmost faith in Tanaka, placing him in charge of not only *Monster Hunter* and *Resident Evil Outbreak File #2*, but also the highly anticipated *Devil May Cry 3*.

Everyone wants to know: Will *Devil May Cry 3* have what it takes to bring the series back to the greatness established by Dante's first demon-slaying adventure? "Making games means you have to try and be innovative—you have to try new ways to get people to play the games and enjoy the games," says Tanaka. "I think it's safe to say that the risks we're trying in *Devil 3* are paying off."

Tanaka identifies the main "risk" as the game's new customization system. "You can choose which style of Dante you would want to play as," he says. "There're a lot of different play styles depending on different people. For example, there are people who are better at using guns...people who are better at evading...people who are better at actually blocking in games. You can pick whichever style fits you and make the game as hard or as easy as you want to. There are a lot of different choices in the game—you can go down a lot of different paths. And it's these choices that make the game deep or not deep, depending on the player."

The producer also promises a deep story for the game—something the series certainly isn't known for. A prequel to the first game, *Devil 3* tells the story of sibling rivalry between a much younger-looking Dante and Virgil, Sparda's other son. Other antagonists stand in Dante's way as well, including both demons and a pair of demon hunters who don't like the fact that Dante's mom called the underworld home. Capcom has recruited Yuji Shimamura, action director for the Japanese cult movie *Versus*, to help with the in-game cut-scenes, too. "If you took all of those and pasted them together, you'd have about an hour-and-twenty-minute-long, really cool, action-packed movie," suggests Tanaka. "And after you clear the story, you will know why Dante has his shop called Devil May Cry."

Tanaka believes that *Devil 3* will live up to expectations—and what little we've seen and played certainly makes it hard to doubt him. But how would he describe it? "In America, you have basic genre categories," he says, "but in Japan, we have a lot. The first game was called 'stylish hard action,' *Devil 2* was 'stylish high action,' and now *Devil 3* is 'stylish crazy action!' Much more crazy! Loco!" We shall see. «

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GODS AND MONSTERS

SONY HEADS TO ANCIENT GREECE WITH GOD OF WAR

One of the first considerations publishers make when thinking about a game is its potential for sequels. Which is one of the things that makes Sony's new game *God of War* unusual: It's hard to imagine how one will create a sequel to a game whose opening scene is of the main character committing suicide.

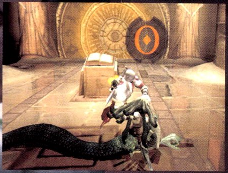
We got our first chance to play the game recently, and what we've seen so far looks impressive. Gameplay, which consists of a combination of combat and puzzle solving, begins as you flash back to three weeks before Kratos' suicide. You will be playing as the Spartan warrior, and your primary weapon as you fight your way through the hordes of monsters and deities opposing you is a pair of blades that are attached to your wrists with chains. The whirling blades are quite stunning to watch and, more importantly, very effective at dispatching enemies. Moves are simple to execute and string together, making it easy to pull off some very impressive-looking maneuvers. Fighting tactics translate according to how you're situated. For example, if you're hanging from a rope or climbing a wall, the move that swings your blades when your feet are firmly planted on the ground will instead have you kicking enemies to the ground or bashing their heads into the wall.

YOUR WHIRLING BLADES DISPATCH ENEMIES VERY EFFECTIVELY.

Another interesting aspect of combat is the minigame element. During fights against certain opponents, one of the symbols from the face buttons will start flashing above the enemies' heads, offering you a noncombat path to victory. Pressing the right buttons at the right time will enable you to deliver a fatal blow to the enemy; if you fail to time it right, you'll be dealt a major hit. The button sequence is randomly generated each time, so you need to be on your toes to execute it correctly.

The puzzles we saw are of fairly typical construction and seem to flow well with the fighting, although they are a bit gorier than your typical adventure-game puzzle—one required Kratos to sacrifice an innocent prisoner in order to move to the next portion of the level. «

Pub. SCEA **Dev.** SCEA Santa Monica **Release** Q1 2005



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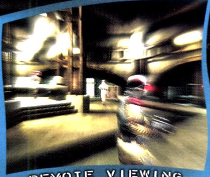

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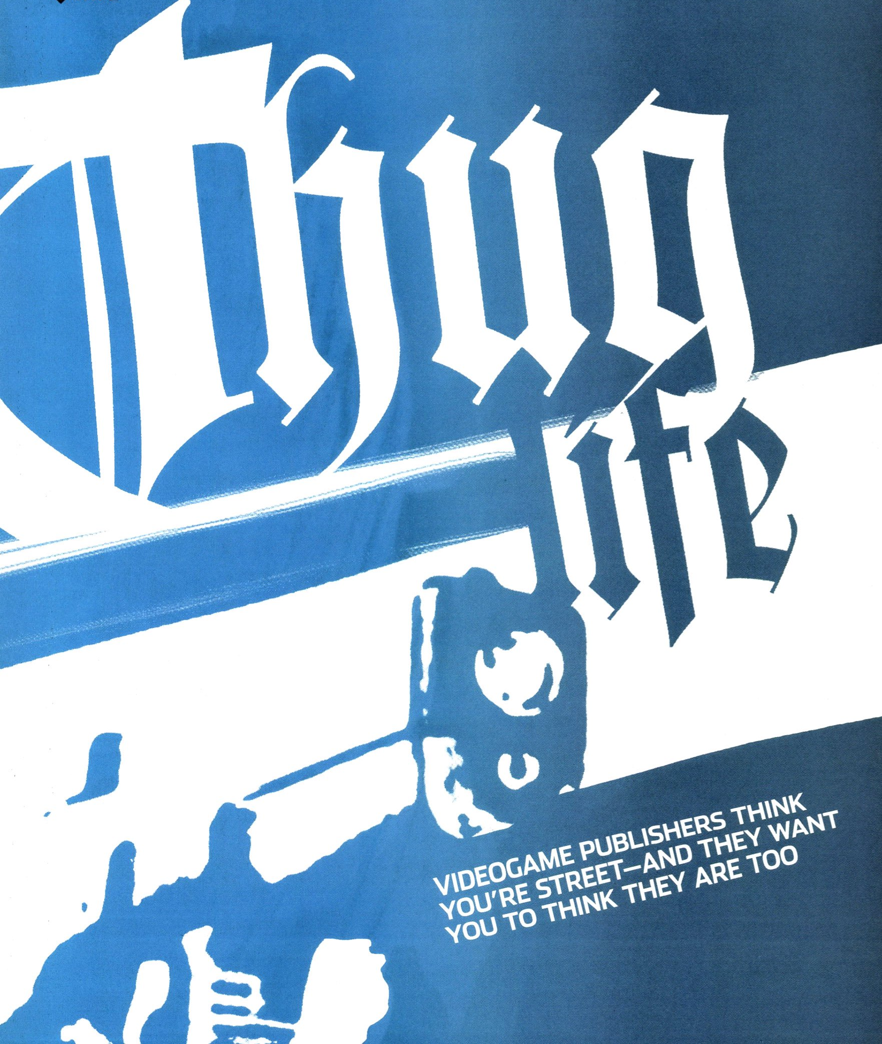
Thug life

VIDEOGAME PUBLISHERS THINK YOU'RE STREET—AND THEY WANT YOU TO THINK THEY ARE TOO



One of the dominating themes at this year's E3 was what many dubbed the "thugging" of the games industry. Alongside the expected and the predictable, the sequels and the remakes, an inordinate amount of emphasis had been placed on urban and hip-hop themes in games. Whether it was established franchises morphing into more streetwise versions of their former selves or new franchises emerging wearing their hip-hop influences on their sleeves, it was clear that the urban lifestyle is being embraced by developers and publishers alike.

"It seems to me that hip-hop is just where the culture is these days," says Marc Ecko, whose Ecko brand name is one of the biggest success stories in urban culture. His fast-growing empire includes everything from shirts, pants, watches, footwear, formalwear, and babywear to his lifestyle magazine *Complex*, and now, through an agreement with Atari, videogames. "I've been seeing the opportunity for a game that taps into this stuff for the past five years," he tells us. "But I'm an outsider. What business does a guy who makes sweatshirts have making a videogame?"

Much more savvy about gaming than he initially lets on, Ecko has some pertinent observations for his new peers in the gaming business. "You can think of this urban trend very much like what happened with all the skate games a few years ago," he explains. "There were a *lot* of failing properties, and ultimately it was the Neversoft guys who won with *Tony Hawk*. It wasn't just that the game was good or because of Tony; it was because they lived the skate culture, too. They understood what it was that

they were doing in the broader sense."

"People want stuff that's aspirational," Eidos President Rob Dyer tells us. His company is definitely aiming to live a thug life in 2004, and many of its upcoming titles are specifically focused on urban themes. "If you look at the games that are successful, they're the ones that tap into something from real life. Hip-hop is an extension of the aspirational lifestyle, and there's definitely a groundswell of games right now that all tap into this culture." Dyer has done his homework on the subject and asserts that what we're talking about here is far broader than simply hip-hop or street-oriented concepts. In the aftermath of some of the company's most respected franchises failing to spark interest last year, it was clear to him that consumer interests were changing faster than anyone anticipated. "Look at a company like Ubisoft," he continues. "Last year, they had two great games: *Splinter Cell* and *Prince of Persia*. In *Splinter Cell*, Sam was a believable, realistic character whom you could aspire to be. The Prince was a dude in baggy pants traveling through time. *Splinter Cell* sold huge numbers, *Prince* didn't. You don't have to be a genius to start working out what's going on here. If you look at what they're doing with the *Prince* sequel, it's now darker, grittier, and more believable. They're reading the market and being smart."

With regard to the hip-hopification of his own titles, which include the thugged-out online shooter *25 to Life* and hip-hop games *Get On Da Mic* and *Get On Da Floor*, Dyer tells us "the market for this stuff has been validated. It's big business. It's not just a bunch of gangsters; there are legitimate people living this lifestyle, and as a result, the whole market has been legitimized. It absolutely changes the way you approach some franchises, and we all really have to look at how we can bring aspirational values into our big-name games. We have to look at more realistic scenarios and ask ourselves if we can develop franchises in that direction. For games to be successful, we have to put the player in a situation he can really envision himself being in. For a franchise like *Legacy of Kain*, that's obviously going to be pretty tough, so we're going to have to take a long, hard look at how we evolve it and whether we can make it more relevant by embracing this stuff."

"The surge in the urban stuff in gaming is a genuine reflection of consumer interest in the culture," says Josh Holmes, producer of *Def Jam Fight for NY*. "As long as that interest holds, you will see games that target this segment. Regardless, the one thing that won't change is the need for quality. To have success with an urban-themed game, you still need to be delivering a great gaming experience. In the end, I think you'll see a few quality titles that authentically represent the culture, and the rest will fade away."

> "It seems to me that hip-hop is where the culture is these days."

"My thought is that the consumer just doesn't care about whether or not a game is more than 10 hours anymore," counters Ecko. "With all the games that are out there right now, there's *too much* game. There's *too much* of an experience. There's no emotional commitment required, but there's too much media. Too much technology. Sports games excel because you can define your own level of commitment. You can play a single game, you can play a whole season, or you can build a dynasty. There's always something that you can feel rewarded by, though."

Sales numbers substantiate this, too; *Madden NFL 2004* was the biggest-selling PS2 game of 2003, outselling the No. 2 game two to one. That No. 2 game? The urban-themed street-racing game *Need for Speed Underground*. The urban revolution began when you weren't even watching.

"I think the problem is that the games industry is generationally nostalgic," Ecko continues. "I don't think the wider group of consumers, the guys who aren't superhardcore but who are still buying games in large numbers, are particularly committed. They just want to have some fun. Technology is evolving much faster than the consumer, and there are so many games that just keep pushing the technology and nobody really cares."

Midway's chief marketing officer Steve Allison agrees with Ecko. When discussing the move away from pure fantasy to realism in Midway's games, Allison characterizes the "dragons and robots" fraternity as "Old school. And when I say that, I mean old boys old school. The guys bitching about this new trend are inching up on 35 years old, and they grew up on old-school gameplay. They're a very vocal bunch, but they're just not the market anymore. Love it or hate it, the market tells us what it wants, and the guys who make *that stuff* win. Look, *Beyond Good & Evil* was a great technical execution that only 60,000 people bought. Why? Because no one was interested in it. It wasn't relevant to anyone. Today, you have to provide what people want, and dragons, elves, and fairies just aren't on the top of their lists right now."

"When you look at media in general, you see a reflection of consumer desire for more contemporary reality in their entertainment," explains Holmes. "This is true of television and

Continued on page 46 >>

Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas

THE FRANCHISE THAT STARTED IT ALL

Did *Grand Theft Auto* kick off the whole urban-lifestyle thing in videogames? It's possible. *GTA3* was certainly one of the first games to embrace thug culture and exploit it for delicious gameplay purposes. *San Andreas* is taking the whole concept much, much further. You've no doubt already devoured every scrap of information Rockstar has revealed so far, so let's try to give you something new. The three cities in the game, Los Santos (based on Los Angeles), San Fierro (based on San Francisco), and Las Venturas (based on Las Vegas) are all joined by areas that are, for want of a better word, the "suburbs" of San Andreas. Each of these areas, we're told, is the same size as a gameplay area in *GTA3*. It seems we can expect *Thelma & Louise*–style car chases and *Dukes of Hazzard*–esque shenanigans as we terrorize the sleepy backwaters of the state. So that's three cities, each the size of Vice City, plus other areas the size of *GTA3*'s. That's a damn big game. «

Pub. Rockstar **Dev.** Rockstar North **Release** October

DEF JAM FIGHT FOR NY

RAPPERS HITTING EACH OTHER WITH FURNITURE

When *Def Jam* President Kevin Liles declared "gaming and hip-hop go hand in hand," we'd wager that a few of you dismissed it as just another brand guy wanting a piece of our action. Boy, were you wrong. *Def Jam Vendetta* helped push EA's Big brand in the direction it so desperately needed to go and proved that hip-hop stars punching the bejesus out of each other was what gamers wanted. *Fight* takes the concept further and blends a variety of fighting styles into a story-driven brawler that sees you encountering 35 well-known hip-hop artists, from Flava Flav to Ludacris. The development team listened to *Vendetta* criticisms and has addressed just about all of them; it's not just a wrestling game, you can now use weapons such as bottles, bats, or pieces of furniture, and there's fully interactive scenery. It even has an item-trading mode (clearly influenced by the lovable GameCube adventure *Animal Crossing*). Bet you didn't expect that, huh? «

Pub. EA Games Dev. EA/Aki Release September

MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION

ROCKSTAR'S GAME IS 20-INCHES STRONG

***Midnight Club* was doing the whole urban street-racing thing** a long time before anyone else was, proving yet again that Rockstar is ahead of the curve with the urban-trend thing. *MC3* has a lot to prove, but the franchise seems to have plenty of fight left in it. *MC3* will be the first game in the franchise to use licensed vehicles, and as with many of its contemporaries, it also taps into the aftermarket culture with "a large number" of licensed parts and accessories, according to Jay Panek, the game's producer at Rockstar San Diego. All this would be more than enough to go toe-to-toe with *Need for Speed Underground*, but the icing on Rockstar's cake is the hookup with *Dub* magazine. If you're into the mod scene, you're no doubt already aware of *Dub*'s claim of being the "original urban automotive lifestyles magazine." It was doing the whole huge-rims-on-Merc-SLs thing way before *Pimp My Ride* showed up on MTV. «

Pub. Rockstar Dev. Rockstar San Diego Release November

ROO 571
CALIFORNIA

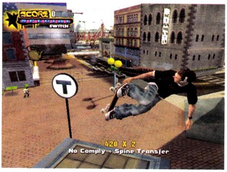
Notorious: Die to Drive

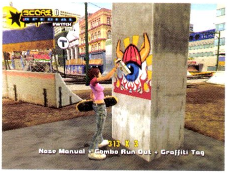
DRIVE, THE THUG SAID

Someone at Ubisoft decided that racing wasn't enough—there needs to be a game that incorporates racing and pure violence. Sure, you can win the racing matches in *Notorious* with actual racing. Or if that requires more energy than you can spare, then you can just use firearms to take out your competition.

Seriously, the premise is to start as a rising West Coast gangster and earn respect and "bling" (Ubisoft's words) by racing, smashing, or shooting other gangsters' cars. As you take out the competition, you can use your winnings to outfit your cozy apartment and start turning it into thug central. There will be more than 30 unique vehicles, ranging from old-school roadsters to modern gangster rides (will Denzel Washington's restored 1978 Monte Carlo with hydraulics from *Training Day* make an appearance?). When you're bored of taking out virtual gangsters, you can mercilessly shoot up your buddies in either four-player splitscreen or two-player online modes. «

Pub. Ubisoft Dev. Ubisoft Release Q1 2005





TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 2: WORLD DESTRUCTION TOUR

THUGGING WITH TONY HAWK

Personalize your own graffiti tags to spray across levels, slap up stickers around the level, throw objects at passersby—we're not sure if this makes you a thug or a punk, but however you define it, *THUG2* definitely lets you wreak havoc.

In the sequel to last year's hit game, you'll be playing as either part of Team Hawk or Team Bam (as in veteran *Hawk* skateboarder Bam Margera). Recruit more than 20 new team members (such as way old-school Ben Franklin) and then switch among which teammate you're skating as on the fly. And in keeping with the destruction theme, some levels have areas you can't access until you start blowing things up.

New modes include a focus mode, which slows the action to help you nail tricks, and an anger mode, which seems to act as kind of a recovery mechanism if you fall while attempting to execute a move. Also added is classic mode, which lets you return to the timed challenges of traditional *Tony Hawk* games. «

Pub. Activision Dev. Neversoft Release Q4 2004

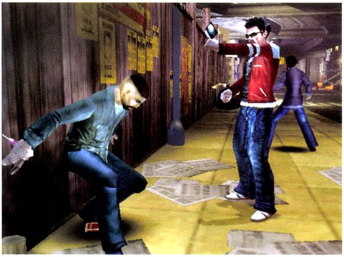
BACKYARD WRESTLING 2: THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD

SUBURBS GET DOWN 'N' DIRTY

There's a fine line between badass and lunatic. That line is routinely crossed by participants in *Backyard Wrestling*. Now, Eidos is atoning for the dismal showing of the first game with a sequel that's been overhauled from the ground up. You want body-part-specific damage? You got it! How about submission holds? No problem! A customizable create-a-wrestler system? New, destructible weapons? Bigger, destructible environments? Check, check, and check. Being able to knock someone down and lay into his or her face with a weed whacker? Um, sure, you got it. Now go take your meds.

Best of all: You can go head-to-head against other players anytime—online. The online mode will support voice chat (face it, smack talk is an absolute must), and a perpetual tourney will be running on Eidos' servers, so you'll always know where your custom wrestler stands among a nation of wrestling lunatics. «

Pub. Eidos Dev. Paradox Release Fall 2004



NARC

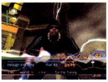
GAME CHARACTERS DO DRUGS

NARC has quite a bold and dangerous focus: drugs. While players won't become drug dealers and the like (instead, they play as the cops who go after such dealers), drugs are still the centerpiece of the game. You can be a straight shooter and just go through the game as a good cop in a typical third-person shooter, or you can "go native" as an undercover cop and start using and even distributing drugs.

Of course, the effects of taking drugs are both positive and negative—weed slows down time, speed speeds you up, crack lets you perform instant head shots (being a "crack shot"), and LSD will give the enemies devil heads, making them easier to take down. Consequently, using drugs will screw up your health meter (liquid soul, the centerpiece drug in the game, will sap all of your health), and outright addiction will make you lose the game. *NARC*'s unique focus on this one aspect of urban culture merits keeping a close eye on it. «

Pub. Midway Dev. Vis Release Q1 2005

There needs to be a game that incorporates racing and pure violence.



GET ON DA MIC

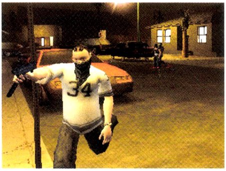
THE FIRST RAPPG

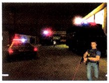
The *Karaoke Revolution* games have covered a lot of musical ground, but both have made one enormous omission: Neither game has a single hip-hop song. Eidos is swooping in to fill that niche with *Get On Da Mic*, a game that plans to go way beyond karaoke and into the full-on hip-hop lifestyle.

The formula starts with 40 big-name rap tracks, but that's just the beginning. It's not just how well you perform, but also how well you look; you'll use your hard-earned in-game cash to buy clothes and gear from real-life outfitters to deck out your character. Once you've got the right look, you'll need the right pad: Further winnings can be used to set up a home base worthy of a showing on *Cribs*.

On top of all that, the game will include a freestyle mode that just lays down the beats so that you can practice your own rhymes—or show off for your friends. The game won't keep score in this mode...but you can be pretty sure your friends will. «

Pub. Eidos Dev. Artificial Mind and Movement Release Fall 2004





25 TO LIFE

URBAN SOCOM

Eidos' capitalization of every boy's childhood memory of playing cops 'n' robbers is both a genius marketing move and a decent-looking game to boot. We fiddled a bit with the multiplayer and found some interesting mechanics in the cops-versus-gangsters dynamic.

The two sides do have more differences than "one wears blue, the other doesn't." For example, the cops have weapons restrictions, but due to being trained professionals, they're much more accurate. Gangsters can use any weapon they want (like an AK-47 set to automatic fire), but they lack the accuracy that the cops have. Also, while players can customize the heck out of their gangster, the cops have a more limited customization palette, allowing only for rank increases and facial tweaks.

Interestingly enough, while there is both a cop and a gangster campaign in the single-player game, Eidos is focusing more on the gangster side. There's even a rumor that the cop campaign is an unlockable and the gangster campaign will be the main focus. «

Pub. Eidos Dev. Avalanche Release Q1 2005

Marc Ecko's Getting Up: Contents Under Pressure

HE MAKES NICE PANTS, AND HATS, AND SHIRTS, AND...

Very little about Atari's partnership with Ecko has been announced so far, aside from the fact that the core gameplay mechanic will be based on tagging (Atari swears it will be more than just a *Jet Set Radio* knockoff). Set for release in June of next year, it's one of the highest-profile license deals that Atari has signed in recent years. Don't know who Marc Ecko is? He's the founder of Ecko Unlimited, the world's largest urban-apparel brand. You've probably seen his shirts, pants, jeans, shoes, watches, hats, Zoo York skateboards, maybe even his G-Unit line of clothes produced in association with 50 Cent, or *Complex*, his increasingly successful urban-lifestyle magazine. He even has a formalwear collection aimed at the urban gentleman about town. Yeah, he knows a thing or two about urban lifestyle. «

Pub. Atari **Dev.** The Collective **Release** June 2005

> "Remember what the movies did to hip-hop? Gaming hasn't even gone through the Electric Boogaloo phase yet."

Continued from page 42 »

movies, and increasingly in games as well. It's also a sign of the overall maturation of the gaming audience. As gamers grow up, their tastes shift toward content they feel is more relevant to their lives. When we were working on the original *NBA Street*, there were some that questioned who the audience would be for a game like street ball, which has its roots in the inner city. That game went on to be embraced by all walks of life. Most people have a natural curiosity for other cultures. So while hip-hop was once a culture that appealed predominantly to inner-city kids, now you've got suburbia listening, and the gaming industry is taking note."

"The Achilles' heel of the games industry is that it wants to take that snapshot," argues Ecko. "It wants to hang its hat on a particular aspect of urban culture, and you *just can't do that*. You can't just hang your hat, you've got to live it and make it your home. You have to be part of the dialogue. You can't buy your way in, and the consumers aren't dumb. People gravitate toward sincerity, so they know when someone's just trying to cash in on something like this. Look at what happened with movies," he laughs. "Remember what the movies did to hip-hop? Gaming hasn't even gone through the *Electric Boogaloo* phase yet, so until we've had our dance-offs and our stereotypes, it's gonna be awful and it's going to be embarrassing and it's going to be at the expense of the culture."

With everyone we interviewed on this subject, the conversation invariably turned to a common subject. "In terms of a game that stretched some boundaries, *Grand Theft Auto* was the thing that really seemed to reflect the broader popular culture," Ecko enthuses. "It was eclectic and it wasn't as much of a simulation of anything, as so many other games are. The gameplay was all wrapped up in an attitude, and that really helped turn *GTA* into a brand that bullied the games industry into thinking about context."

"At Rockstar, we have always focused on making games that we wanted to play," says Dan Houser, vice president of creative at the company. "Titles that felt both authentic to the subject matter (while still allowing gameplay to flourish) and titles that were about things we found interesting. The whole company was set up with the expressed belief that games were at the time as influential to young people as any other media.

"We don't particularly go after 'urban themes' for our games—we just make games we think are original and about subject matters we find interesting," he continues. "*Midnight Club* and *Thrasher: Skate and Destroy* were both heavily influenced by subcultures, but I think *Grand Theft Auto* and, say, *Max Payne*, are more influenced by movies than by street culture. It's just they are arguably more compelling than movies, so they feed back into street culture, as people love playing them. This is a different side of the same coin—games are getting more influential because they are getting better, and this increased influence makes them a more powerful way of expressing things or reflecting a culture."

"*Grand Theft Auto* was really what validated the aspirational approach with games," Dyer says. "Dan and the guys at Rockstar understood this before the rest of us. They understood what people wanted."

"It wasn't the game that kicked off the urban-gaming trend, though," says Ecko. "It was something else. We still haven't seen the *Tony Hawk* of urban games. Maybe there's been a turning point in publishers' minds, where they all think they've got the keys to the 'next big thing,' but I don't think there's been a game that makes the right statement yet."

Perhaps *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* will be the game that makes this statement this October, or even Ecko's own game next June. One thing is for certain, though—games are going to evolve radically in the next couple of years, and the evolution will be thematic rather than technological. Eidos' Dyer sums it up for us: "Games have traditionally been aimed at suburban white kids. But you have to realize that suburban white kids are into hip-hop. I think we all got stuck into thinking that gamers were a certain kind of person, and now we all have to wake up to the fact that maybe we're *wrong*." «

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NINE REASONS WHY

CATWOMAN SUCKS

CATS HAVE NINE LIVES, AND WE HAVE NINE REASONS TO AVOID THE WHOLE FRANCHISE

1 It has about as little to do with the Catwoman we've come to know and love from *Batman* as is possible. She is now the "shy, sensitive artist" Patience Philips, not Selina Kyle, and she doesn't live in Gotham City.

2 An Egyptian cat inexplicably resurrects her from the dead and gives her cat powers for no apparent reason.

3 The original Catwoman was the world's most famous cat burglar. In *Catwoman* the game (and movie), she's fighting against the most evil of evil corporations...a cosmetics company.

4 It's yet another game that forces you to use the right analog stick for combat. Did you try *Rise to Honor*? Sucks, doesn't it?

5 Utilizing Patience's "unique cat senses" requires the digital dexterity of a double-jointed octopus. To navigate the monotonous level on display at E3, you had to hold down shoulder buttons and jab others simply to get her to climb a ladder.

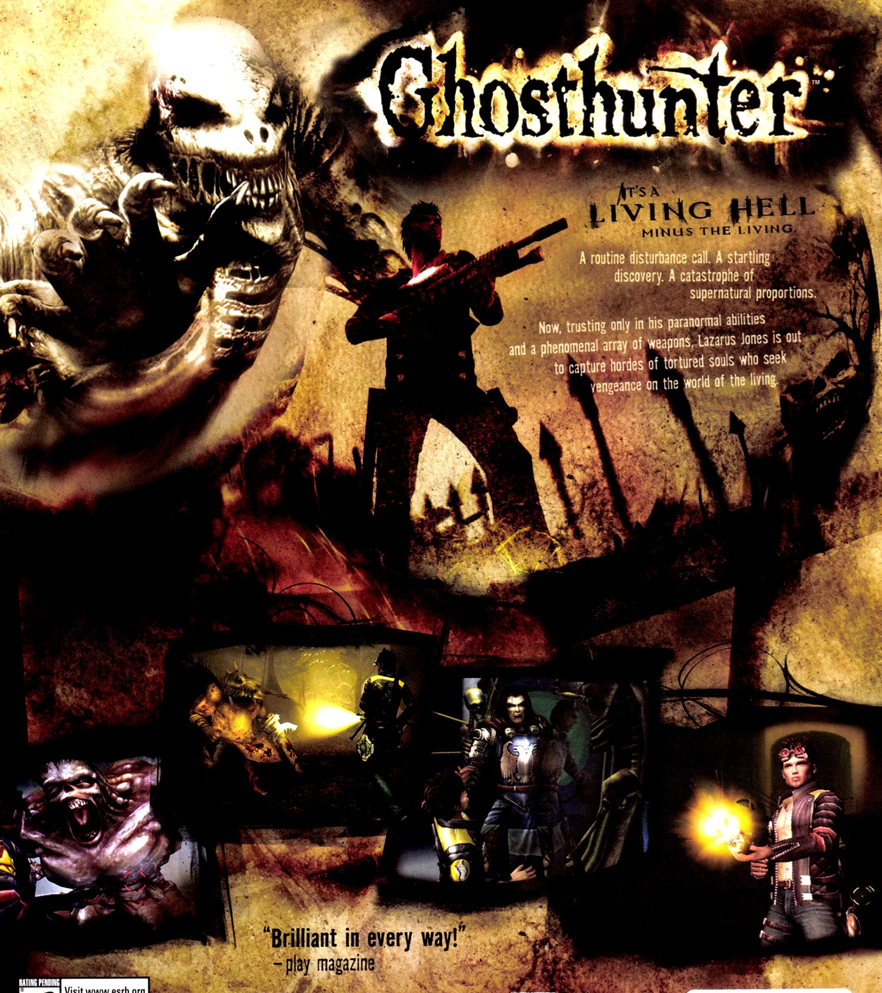
6 One of the "three challenging bosses" in the game is...wait for it...an *accountant*.

7 The writing team for the movie worked on stinkers such as *The Net* and *The Core*.

8 The Catwoman suit, designed by Jean-Paul Gaultier (previously famous for making Madonna's boobs pointy in 1990), is ugly. Sure, we get Halle's abs and cleavage, but they're covered by an outfit that a stripper in a biker bar wouldn't be caught dead wearing.

9 Sharon Stone. «

Pub. EA Games **Dev.** EA UK **Release** July 1



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ALL EYES ON PSP

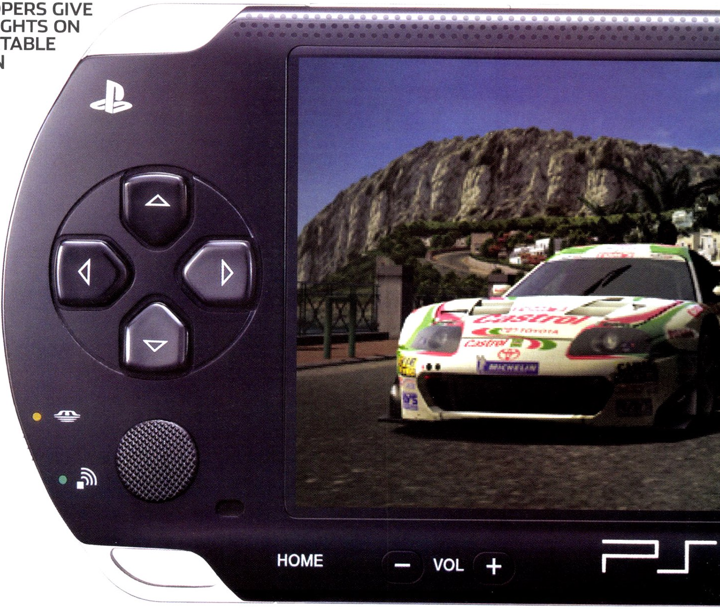
Ape Escape

Armored Core: Formula Front

Dynasty Warriors

KEY DEVELOPERS GIVE THEIR THOUGHTS ON SONY'S PORTABLE REVOLUTION

Now that all the hustle and bustle of E3 has subsided and everyone has had a chance to reflect on the show, it's time to find out what developers really think about the PSP—otherwise known as the "oh my god, that's amazing" by showgoers. We spoke with a few important members of the development community to find out which of the PSP's features impressed them the most and what parts of the device could possibly transform into roadblocks on Sony CEA's path to dominate the handheld market.

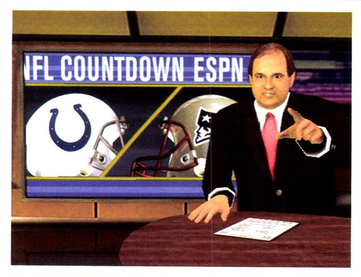


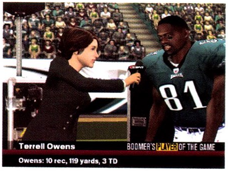
STATS	WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT THE PSP?	WHAT ARE ITS WEAKNESSES?
YANNIS MALLAT Producer, Ubisoft Projects: Almost certainly a *Prince of Persia*–based game	"What I like the most is the immediate appeal it creates: When you see it, you want it. This is an amazing toy for adults, and I think Sony is just re-creating the Walkman effect with this piece of hardware. You have to have it if you're cool. Now, the screen and its huge resolution combined with the powerful capabilities of the machine (3D engine, memory, etc.) altogether make it a real breakthrough in visuals and gaming experience for handheld consoles. Before PSP, there was such a gap between games you play at home on your console and games you play on your handheld. This gap is narrowed now, and I would definitely see myself playing a *Prince of Persia* game on PSP, rather than a poor 2D platform game on any other handheld. I hope some original content will be out there on this machine, especially for wireless multiplayer mode and any other connectivity feature." 	"It's going to be easy to develop regular PlayStation 2 games on PSP, which could lead publishers and developers to quickly port their games on it. Thus, in terms of creativity, original content, and handheld design approach, I think consumers may have to wait a little or pick up a reduced choice of good games to fully benefit from the gaming part of the machine. In the meantime, if you already have your games on your PlayStation 2, do you really want to pay for the PSP versions? "Also, although the screen looks amazing with the 16:9 aspect ratio and the incredible resolution, I wonder if many people will want to pay for movies. There's always a risk to have console-specific media support for an already existing media. From a business perspective, it all depends on the pricing compared to the perceived value from the consumer—should I own a $15 PSP movie or rent it for $3 on my regular DVD player?"
TATSUYA MINAMI Producer, Capcom Projects: A PSP version of *The Nightmare Before Christmas* likely	"It's got a really big and beautiful screen. That coupled with the new UMD media means we now have some real freedom to design the types of games we want. People think that we can make anything we want with current systems, but one thing we always want more of is space—for a portable, the new media more than covers that area."	"It's being marketed as an all-in-one media device, not a dedicated gaming machine. I'm worried that the more mainstream this goes, the more there is the possibility of the focus going away from games and more toward media. But then again, that is a bridge we will have to cross when we get to it."
YUJI NAKA Director, Sonic Team Projects: *Puyo Pop*	"The Wi-Fi capabilities and the 16:9 aspect ratio are brilliant. You can play wireless online everywhere. *Puyo Pop Fever* (working title), my first PSP game, will be the first *Puyo Pop Fever* game to support online play on consoles or handhelds. *Puyo Pop Fever* utilizes the wide screen, so you'll be able to play with your friend face-to-face by holding one PSP from both sides."	"The price might possibly be a problem. I don't have any pricing information just yet, though. It is my hope that Sony is preparing a pricing strategy that will make everyone happy."
BOB STEVENSON President and Cofounder, Planet Moon Projects: *Infected*	"After seeing and holding the PSP at E3, I had one of those rare moments in this industry when you say to yourself, 'This is just really, really good; I must have one now!' It looks as sexy as an iPod, the screen clarity is better than anyone expected, and the size of the unit and its control placement feel just right. "From a game-design perspective, a handheld with similar power to the PS2 and built-in Wi-Fi opens a whole world of possibility. We have been excited about making single-player games that feed into great multiplayer experiences ever since our ventures into that arena with *Giants: Citizen Kabuto*. I am also very excited by the prospect of making games that can be played 'opportunistically,' rather than relying on the player to sit down for prolonged sessions for hours at a time. "The PSP is the first handheld that is technically strong enough for us to make the kinds of games we want to create without having to make huge compromises. From a production standpoint, we should be able to make one great game every year, or even two or three games with multiple teams, rather than having one gigantic team working on one concept for three years. It will keep us fresh creatively. Also, from a creative and technical standpoint, the PSP is a better fit [than the Nintendo DS] for the types of games that Planet Moon builds. Our last three games—*MDK*, *Giants*, and *Armed & Dangerous*—have been fast-paced third-person action titles with strong story and character elements that drove the narrative. Our first PSP title, *Infected*, will continue that tradition, with the game design specifically tailored to the strengths of the PSP."	"The main perceived issue is the assumed cost of the PSP itself (people are guessing around $249 to $299). There tends to be a knee-jerk reaction that such a price point would be too high to compete in the handheld space that Nintendo dominates. However, Sony is clearly hoping to create a new market for handheld gamers, much in the same way it did in the console market with PS1 and PS2. Outside of gaming, in order to legitimately use the PSP for storing music, pictures, or any sizable amount of personal data, the storage size of the memory sticks is going to have to increase and the price needs to come down significantly."
ALEX WARD Creative Manager, Criterion Projects: Renderware for PSP and possibly versions of *Black* and *Burnout*	"That I'll own one in a few months' time! Frankly, I am astonished by this hardware. Some of the Criterion engineers shot video of the machine at E3. All you can hear on this tape is them talking about how amazed they are by the screen quality. This video sent a wave of excitement through the Criterion office. It's certainly the most exciting machine since the arrival of the original PlayStation back in 1995. The machine is sleek, sexy, and makes my wallet glow every time I think about it. We are going to make some great titles for this system. Image quality on that screen is near HD quality, so we think that's our favorite thing about the PSP right now."	"I suppose that with any portable device the big question is always going to be, How long will the batteries last? But I'm more than confident that Sony has some cool solutions for this. They said the same thing about portable DVD players a few years back, yet we're at the stage where five or six hours of play is not a problem."

"THERE TENDS TO BE A KNEE-JERK REACTION THAT SUCH A PRICE POINT WOULD BE TOO HIGH TO COMPETE."

IT COULD...GO...ALL...THE...WAY!

EIGHT REASONS ESPN NFL 2K5 COULD BE THIS YEAR'S NO. 1 FOOTBALL GAME





1 FURTHER ESPN INTEGRATION Instead of just hearing Chris Berman prep you, now you see Boomer on the *SportsCenter* set. Expect pregame, halftime, and postgame shows complete with highlights (full-motion with hard drive, stills without), and Trey Wingo and Mel Kiper join in to discuss NFL happenings (trades, injuries, etc.) and hot prospects, respectively.

2 DE-FENSE! While *Madden* utilizes the right analog stick for big hits, *ESPN* uses pressure sensitivity for the tackle button. Hold it down for a wrapping tackle or tap it for a higher-risk attempt at a crushing blow.

3 NARROW ESCAPES If you see a lineman headed straight for your quarterback, hit the right analog stick to execute a QB evasive maneuver. Also, hitting ⊗ as a defender wraps up a ball carrier gives him a shot at escaping the defender's grasp.

4 PEANUT VENDORS Plus about 200 more great-looking cut-scenes, including Gatorade dumps (licensed!), tailgaters, locker room scenes, and more.

5 NEW FRANCHISE FEATURES Franchise mode isn't just for Sundays anymore. On a day-by-day basis, manage every aspect of your team: coaches, rehabbing players, preparations for the next opponent, and more. Focusing on offense will help you overcome an awesome D, but your own defense will be more vulnerable because it's getting less attention. You could cause injuries if you work guys too hard!

6 25TH ANNIVERSARY MODE Celebrate a quarter century of the total sports network by reliving—or changing—25 of the NFL's greatest moments of the past 25 years. The mode includes all names, even for the retired players.

7 ONLINE ENHANCEMENTS If your Network Adaptor is plugged in, you're logged into Sega's network when you turn the game on. Play in an online league, and have injuries, trades, and more saved on the online server. It's basically an online season mode, and you can even log onto the Web to check on things.

8 VIP SYSTEM As you play games using a profile, *ESPN* learns your play style. You can load your profile into the CPU as your opposition to have the A.I. play the way you do. Put your profile online, and others can effectively play against you without actually playing against you. This means you can use your friend's profile as practice so you can kill him the next time you actually play against each other. The game even includes some teams that follow the play styles of celebrities. Because we know you've always wanted to compete against Jamie Kennedy and Carmen Electra. «

Pub. ESPN Videogame/Sega **Dev.** Visual Concepts
Release August

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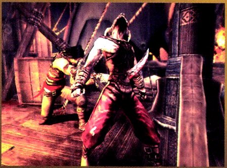
PRINCE OF DARKNESS

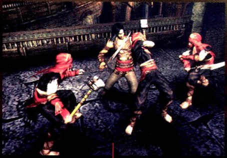
DISSECTING THE LEANER, MEANER PRINCE OF PERSIA

This is not your little brother's Prince. Don't believe us? In an E3 demo, we watched this newly buffed-up badass run up a wall, grab a rope, swing back and forth, leap off at the apex of the swing and run along a wall to a hanging tapestry, plunge his sword into the tapestry and slide halfway down, grab the bottom, swing a few times, run back across the wall in the opposite direction, whip out his sword, and cleanly decapitate two bad guys standing below as he flitted by. Excited yet?

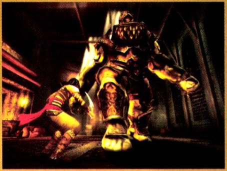
Pub. Ubisoft **Dev.** Ubisoft Montreal **Release** Holidays 2004



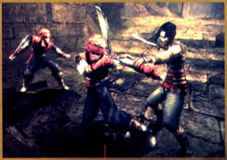
This sword is missing something. What could it be? Oh, yes: blood. Big, oozing gobs of blood. *Prince of Persia 2* is *much* more violent than the first game, with decapitations, impalings, and eviscerations aplenty. Even though some of the enemies appear to be filled with...hmm... *sand?*...you will fight plenty of flesh-and-blood bad guys. This will be easy to deduce from all the flesh and blood *flying around.*



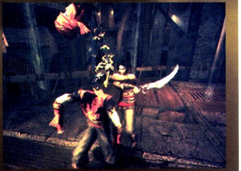
Mobility is a key component of the new battle system. No longer will enemies patiently wait for their turn to be killed; you'll need to keep moving, keep trying out new attacks, keep experimenting with the branching combat system to find out the most efficient way to dispatch all who dare oppose you. The developers are doing their best to ensure that the combat possibilities are, for all intents and purposes, infinite.



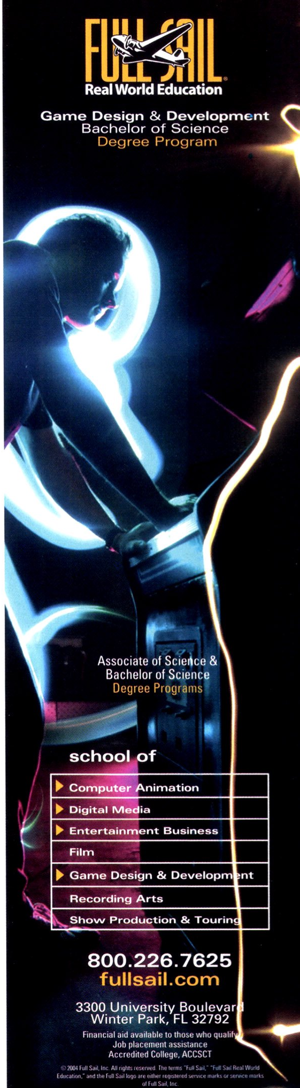
Older, wiser, hairier. The Prince's history of trials and tribulations is etched in his newly chiseled visage. By showboating in a heated battle instead of getting down to the business of killing things, he allowed his dearest friend to be slaughtered. That's enough to make any man look pensive. And his environment has matured in kind: You'll now be fighting your way through a deadly underworld filled with big, nasty beasts.



There's something to be said for being able to reach out and grab someone. This is one of the significant benefits of not having to carry that dratted dagger around all the time: The Prince can use his free hand to grab an enemy in a variety of ways, depending on where he is in relation to his foe. What comes next? Here's a hint: It involves someone losing an arm.



This is not a dagger. You may not think that's a big deal, but trust us—it is. Here, it's a second sword, but it can be whatever you want it to be: This time around, the Prince can pick up and use just about any weapon he comes across. And he uses them well, most spectacularly with the double-fisted decapitation you see above. It's like he's using a pair of pruning shears, only someone's head gets pruned.



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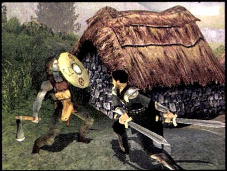
KING ARTHUR

KONAMI DRAWS A SWORD FROM THE STONE THAT IS HOLLYWOOD

According to Antoine Fuqua, King Arthur was a half-Roman, half-Briton fellow who hooked up with a Celt who often painted herself blue. While most versions of the King Arthur legend are based on Sir Thomas Malory's book (*Le Morte d'Arthur*), Fuqua's movie takes the quasi-historical approach of finding a plausible inspiration for the popular myth. The movie drops the medieval Britain setting and aims for the Dark Ages, with Arthur as a Roman general who has to contend with both the Woads (natives) and the Saxons (competing conquerors) for control over England. Arthur's knights are supposedly captured Samaritans in service of Rome, while Guinevere is now an Amazon-esque warrior maiden among the Woads—the same natives Merlin belongs to.

With a movie that has such heavy emphasis on combat and memorable characters, a game is expected. One of the first things Konami did with its new location in Los Angeles was snatch up the publishing rights for such a game. Thanks to the presence of blockbuster producer Jerry Bruckheimer, you can expect the movie to contain tons of scenes of Roman and Samaritan warriors hacking the crap out of both the Woads and Saxons. Which results in the easy transition to a straightforward actionfest complete with on-foot and mounted combat. Since you can play as one of the five main characters (including Arthur, Lancelot, and Guinevere), you get to control the digital likenesses of Clive Owen and even Keira Knightley. The game follows the movie's plot closely—to the point where scenes from the movie will segue right into gameplay. Also, thanks to the two-player co-op mode, you can easily imitate those scenes of Knightley and Owen riding around on horses together, killing Saxons left and right. We're piqued by this reinterpretation of the classic legend and hope that controlling a digital Keira Knightley is as fun as it sounds. «

Pub. Konami Digital Ent.–America **Dev.** Krome Studios **Release** Q4



MORE ARTHURS
Our favorite versions of the Arthur tale are *Excalibur* and *Monty Python & The Holy Grail*.

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HIDE AND SEEK

PSX GOES MISSING

See that shiny new PSX sitting in the corner of your living room? No? Well, neither do we. Sony's been amazingly quiet about the North American release of its PlayStation 2 on steroids, especially after the company shipped 100,000 units to the Japanese market a few weeks after its debut.

However, PSX encountered a number of problems shortly thereafter, including complaints from consumers that it didn't ship with all the promised features and reports that Sony stopped manufacturing the unit due to a decrease in demand. This may have put a wrench in the company's plans to release PSX in North America, as evidenced by the console's almost complete absence from Sony's yearly financial report and E3. When questioned on the subject, a Sony representative said only that details on the North American release will be announced at a later date, but there don't seem to be any concrete plans for the über-PS2. «

JUST MARRIED

SAMMY AND SEGA TIE THE KNOT, SORT OF

Pachinko and Sonic—it's a match made in heaven, or at least that's what Sammy hopes. The pachinko giant and videogame publisher has moved forward with its complicated plans to acquire Sega by forming a new company called Sega Sammy Holdings. The short version: The new company will allow Sega and Sammy to perform a stock swap that makes both companies a subsidiary of Sega Sammy Holdings and gives Sammy 72 percent control.

From a purely gaming standpoint, Sammy benefits far more from the deal than Sega does. Sammy plans to integrate much of Sega's technology and property into its pachinko machines in Japan. Additionally, Sammy plans on pushing its Atomiswave hardware as the main platform for arcade development.

Unfortunately for Sega, its eight studios will be absorbed, leaving many to speculate that the heads of these studios will leave before the merger is approved by Sega's and Sammy's stockholders this summer. «

JAPAN TOWN

THE VIEW FROM OVER THERE

ANDREW VESTAL teaches English in the land of our friends to the East. He eagerly awaits the day when videogame innovation runs amok.

It used to be that Japanese and American gamers had quite similar tastes: Japanese gamers liked Japanese games, and Western gamers,well, they liked Japanese games, too. But the past five years have seen a sea change. The American Top 10, once dominated by Japanese-developed titles, is now dominated by games such as *Tony Hawk* and *Grand Theft Auto*, with their emphasis on player freedom and creativity.

Meanwhile, the Japanese market has contracted to a fraction of its former size. While more than 40 PlayStation 2 games have sold more than a million copies in the States, Japan has had only 10 million-plus sellers. This shrinkage has commonly been blamed on the dour Japanese economy and the rise of cell phone gaming, but recently, industry heavyweights have started lashing out at a new target: the games themselves. Nintendo President Satoru Iwata has vocally proclaimed the industry to be in a "crisis of innovation." He argues that new forms of gameplay are the only thing that will drive continued industry growth. However, since most Japanese software continues to offer up more of the same, player interest has continued to steadily wane.

How can the market best be rekindled? The most obvious solution—publish more Western titles in Japan—isn't as easy as it sounds. Japanese gamers are notoriously resistant to foreign products; even Game of the Year candidates such as *Halo* and *Metroid Prime* often sell fewer than 100,000 copies. Yet, there is hope: Capcom has sold more than 400,000 copies of *GTA3* in Japan, and first-week sales of *Vice City* indicate its numbers will far eclipse its predecessor's.

But any major changes in the Japanese industry will have to happen from within. One possible catalyst is the upcoming *Final Fantasy XII*. In an interview, character designer Akihiko Yoshida readily admits that "many team members are huge fans of non-Japanese games," and this is apparent in the way the game disposes of large parts of console-RPG design expectations. Random battles have been eliminated; the battle system is quasi-real-time; the main story is augmented by a nonlinear "quest" system; and the graphics engine emphasizes real-time, character-filled environments over prerendered cinematics. *Final Fantasy XII* also has two features not found in any Western game: name-brand recognition and guaranteed sales of more than 2 million units. It's possible the game will act as a Trojan horse, introducing Western design philosophies to a wide swath of Japanese gamers and designers. If the market is going to recover, it will have to happen one game at a time. «

INDUSTRY HEAVYWEIGHTS HAVE A NEW TARGET: THE GAMES.

RUMORS

ALL THE PLAYSTATION RUMORS THAT ARE FIT TO PRINT

PS2 LIVE?

Twice now, SCEA executives have alluded to a more structured online service for PS2 that offers features similar to Xbox Live. First, senior VP Andrew House talked about it in his keynote speech at the Game Developers Conference in March, and then big boss man, Kaz Hirai, discussed unified logins and billing at the E3 press conference in May. Does this mean there will be a full-on service announcement soon? It seems unlikely. What we can expect is a behind-the-scenes move by Sony and its partners to provide a more structured service that's a little less in your face than Live. It may well end up being tied in with your PlayStation Underground membership, with all games drawing on a central database of registered users so that you have the same name on the PlayStation.com boards and in all new online games. We'll keep you posted on developments.

***SOCOM III*, WE HEAR, IS STILL MORE THAN A YEAR AWAY.**

SOCOM 3

We all expected an announcement at E3, but *SOCOM* news was conspicuous in its absence. What's going on? For a while, it was thought that *SOCOM II* would negate the need for an update after just a year because of its hard-drive support. After rumblings of a new map circulating two months ago, we have yet to see anything except a bug fix. *SOCOM III*, we hear, is still more than a year away—but there are rumored to be at least two full maps that will be released over the summer once Sony reveals its new service.

PSP-TO-PS2 CONNECTIVITY

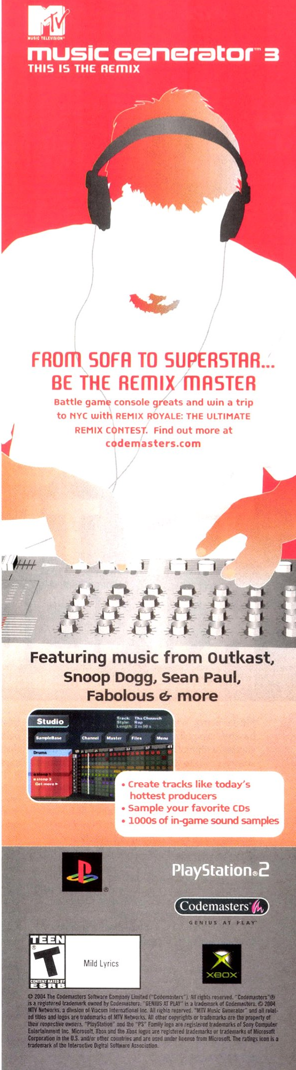
If this is going to happen, we don't expect Sony to say much about it until the Tokyo Game Show happens at the end of September, but there are strong rumors circulating that one of the key features of PSP is the idea that you can take PS2 save games with you. How will it work? If you're playing, say, *Killzone* on PS2 and plug in your PSP, you'll be able to pick up the portable version of the game at the same point, continue through the game, and then resync the two devices when you get back to your PS2. *Killzone*, we hear, is one of the first games to make use of this feature (although the PSP version of the game has not yet been announced), and we also hear that *Gran Turismo 4* may be a showcase for the feature (see below).

GT4 SUPPORTS EVERYTHING

Although by no means confirmed, it's starting to look like *Gran Turismo 4* is even more ambitious than we'd originally thought. Along with the photo mode previewed at E3 and the fact that you can plug a USB printer into your PS2 for hard copies, we're also expecting a number of other connectivity announcements in the coming months. In short, the big *GT4* rumor is that "if you can plug it into the PS2, the game supports it." The fact that there will be hard-drive support is no big secret, the Logitech wheel we've already seen, and we already have confirmation on Internet play through the Network Adaptor. Next up, expect word on PSP and EyeToy support. We fully expect Yamauchi and his team to make an announcement outlining how the versions of the game on PS2 and PSP will work together in the next couple of months. Given the emphasis placed on "the human element" in the game at E3, we have suspicions that you'll be able to map your own face on the driver in the game using EyeToy. Imagine how photo mode will look then. "Look, it's me! In Venice! In my Mercedes SLR!" So that's everything: Logitech wheel, Network Adaptor, hard drive, EyeToy, printer, and PSP. Is there anything it doesn't do? «

QUICK HITS

- Two *Matrix* rumors: 1) *Matrix Online* may be PS2-bound, and 2) there's likely to be a sequel to *Enter the Matrix*. Hooray.
- There are possibly two sequels to *Red Dead Revolver* in the works, both with celebrity voice talent.
- Expect *NBA Street Vol. 3* to be announced by the end of the year.



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KEYS TO THE KINGDOM

NOMURA DISCUSSES HIS REIGN OVER KINGDOM HEARTS

SECRET ADMIRER

Tetsuya Nomura generally doesn't like saying who he admires in the industry since they're all competitors, but he has no problem mentioning Yoji Shinkawa, the art director for *Metal Gear Solid* and *Zone of the Enders*. "I'm surprised by the huge number of characters he creates and how many drawings he does for them," Nomura says. "I would like to work like that."

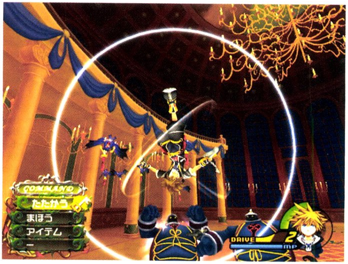
He is Sora. Walking into the meeting with a baseball cap pulled securely over his face and shorts—with multiple belt buckles no less—that stretch down to the middle of his shins, Tetsuya Nomura is nearly a real-life reflection of the hero in both *Kingdom Hearts* and *Kingdom Hearts II*. It's not surprising, really. Out of all the characters Nomura's designed in his career at Square (which includes well-known faces from *Final Fantasy VII* to *Final Fantasy X*), the cheery keyblade-bearing youngster is at the top of his list. "Sora is my favorite character," Nomura says. "[*Kingdom Hearts*] was the first game I directed, so I could give all the characters a fresh look even though there were some superiors involved [in the design process]."

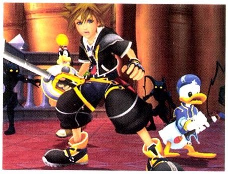
Clearly, Nomura is excited about continuing directing duties for *Kingdom Hearts II* because it gives him an opportunity to fix some of the problems with the previous game, as well as integrate features that originally didn't make the cut. "The engine has been redeveloped," Nomura explains. "I'm really proud of the enhanced battle system and that all of the characters have a serious role this time around." Even the infamous Gummi Ship portion of *Kingdom Hearts* has been retooled for the sequel. "It was a good concept," Nomura says, "but it's completely new in *Kingdom Hearts II*. It's more like an attraction or a ride."

Nomura knows this experience is crucial to his career, but he relishes the opportunity to learn more about directing before moving on to other projects. But there's a bittersweet side to his involvement with *Kingdom Hearts II*. "I love Sora, but it's with a broken heart," Nomura mutters out from underneath his hat.

Indeed, not unlike a parent giving a child up for adoption, Nomura has no control over Sora or any of the other original characters appearing in *Kingdom Hearts*. The contract between Square Enix and Disney gives almost full control of the *Kingdom Hearts* property over to Disney. If you happen to see Sora appearing outside of a game in something like a cartoon, there's very little chance Nomura is involved, but that doesn't affect his excitement (or ours) for *Kingdom Hearts II*. «

Pub. Square Enix **Dev.** Square Enix **Release** Spring 2005





Many of the characters from the original game are returning, including Mickey Mouse, who kicks some serious ass.

Part robot. Part kid. All action.

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punch against Atlas.

Blast enemies with Astro's
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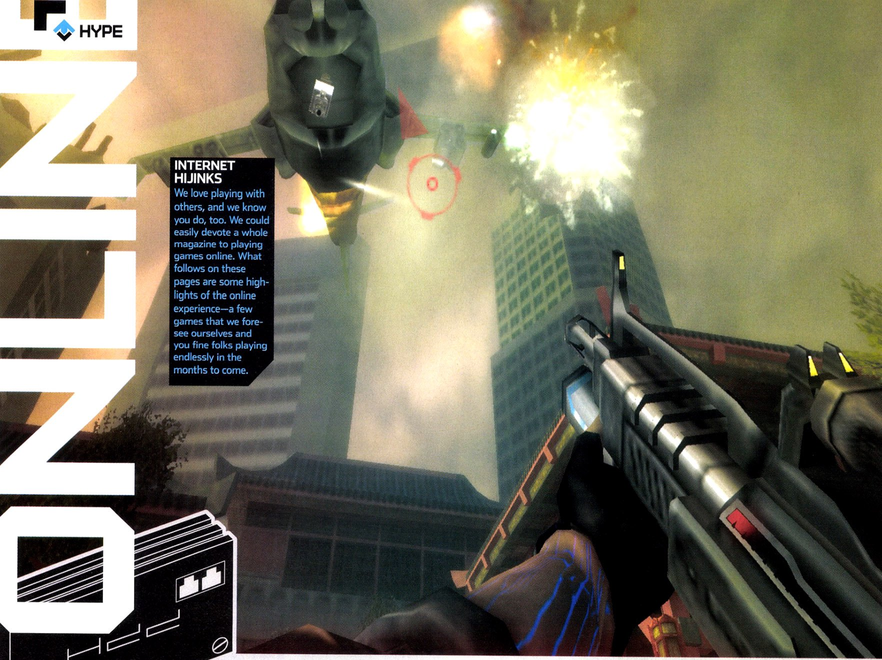
ONLINE



INTERNET HIJINKS

We love playing with others, and we know you do, too. We could easily devote a whole magazine to playing games online. What follows on these pages are some highlights of the online experience—a few games that we foresee ourselves and you fine folks playing endlessly in the months to come.

SNOWBLIND

BLINDING US WITH SCIENCE

Is 2004 destined to become the year of the first-person shooter? Judging from the genre's showing at E3, it's a distinct possibility. But few of the shooters on display appeared to match *Snowblind* in variety, innovation, and sheer graphical beauty.

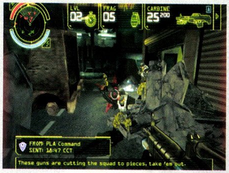
What makes this game so special, you ask? Part of it is what looks like a very new approach to the player's arsenal. As a biologically enhanced soldier in a near-future setting, you have a hefty selection of biotechnical power-ups at your disposal: You can slow down time (shut up, it is not bullet time), heal yourself at will, and more.

Your physical arsenal, though, is even more interesting. You'll have weapons and gadgets that go far beyond the standard machine-gun and rocket-launcher fare. One particularly cool weapon is a swarm of homing drones; these golf-ball-sized buggers will intelligently seek out enemies and issue electric shocks. The best part is that they're big enough to shoot, so the enemies will try to do just that—often hitting each other in the process, while you just sit back and laugh and laugh and laugh.

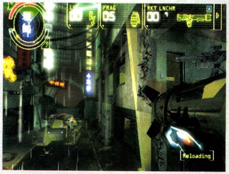
Gadget highlights include the Bot Dominator, a device that lets you take control of A.I.-controlled robots, and the riot shield, a collapsible, free-standing defense mechanism that you can drop anywhere, anytime, for instant cover—or use offensively to pen in your enemies.

The game looks so sharp and runs so smooth that the idea of online matches is exciting. Eidos confirms that the game will support 16 players (with voice chat, of course) and a mix of standard and brand-new game types. Expect deathmatch, capture-the-flag, and assault modes—but expect a lot more, too. The unusual weapons and gadgets, the destructible environments, the possibility of user-controlled vehicles, and the general polished style of what we've seen so far all have us jonesing for some head-to-head action. We'll let you know if it turns out as well as we hope.

Pub. Eidos **Dev.** Crystal Dynamics **Release** Winter



FROM: PLA Command
SENT: 18:47 CCT
These guns are cutting the squad to pieces, take 'em out.



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TIMESPLITTERS FUTURE PERFECT

A FUTURE FILLED WITH MONKEYS AND ROBOTS

So, you like to shoot things, do you? How about monkeys—do you like to shoot monkeys? Would you like to shoot monkeys online? Yeah, we thought so; for our money, there's nothing better than monkeys. That's why *TimeSplitters Future Perfect* has got us so excited.

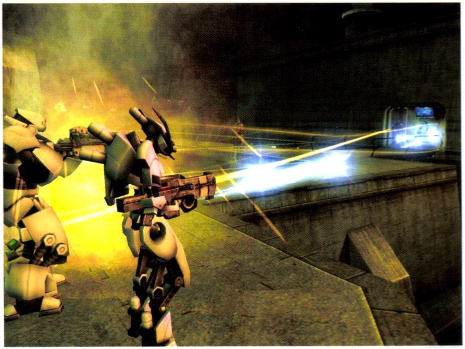
Finally delivering on the promise made before PS2 ever went online, Free Radical's *Future Perfect* will feature online 16-player deathmatch and co-op play. Knowing how the multiplayer modes in the previous games worked, we've got high expectations. And not just because of the monkeys—though that's a big part of it.

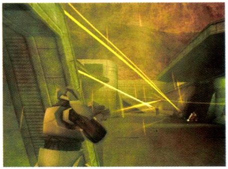
We already know about one huge addition Free Radical is making to the game: vehicles. We like to drive vehicles in shooters, and we're sincerely hoping they will be available online. Even better would be if they're available in the map-making tool; yes, once again, you'll be able to build your own levels from scratch—only this time, you get to take your homemade levels online. (Look for a level based on our office shortly after launch. It will probably have monkeys in it.)

This isn't even mentioning the coolest addition to the single-player mode: Now, you get to team up with a very special character—yourself. As you travel through time, jumping from 1914 to 2401 and to points in between, you will periodically run into yourself, using your time-travel ability to head back a few minutes and help yourself out of a particularly tough jam. If this makes your head hurt, don't worry—a degree in quantum physics won't be required to enjoy the game.

An appreciation of monkeys, however, will.

Pub. EA Games **Dev.** Free Radical **Release** 2005





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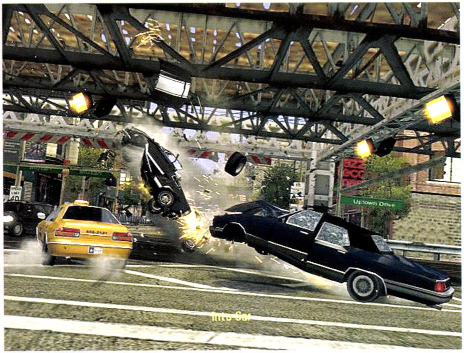


BURNOUT 3

OH, THE HUMANITY!

Your hands grip the controller a little tighter, your head movements are in sync with the car onscreen, and your eyes are wide open. That pretty much sums up the experience of playing any of the *Burnout* games, but with *Burnout 3,* the intensity is amplified thanks to its online play. Now, on top of all those other things you normally have to worry about in a typical *Burnout* game, you have a human competitor to deal with. A competitor who will will take every possible opportunity to slam you into a wall, oncoming traffic, or any other sort of obstacle that will cause your car to fly up into the air and land in a horribly mangled mess. Of course, you can use equally brutal tactics against those same drivers, but there might be a price to pay—concentrating too much on your opponents can often result in a horrible, horrible wreck.

But really, there are all kinds of different ways to win a head-to-head race. You can be the aforementioned intimidator and just smash people into walls, or you can play it safe by narrowly missing cars and filling your boost meter—though the definition of "safe" varies depending on whether you're racing through oncoming traffic or just going with the flow.

Frankly, it's the most fun we've had with a racing game for a while, and online variations of the single-player modes—including the spectacular crash mode—make *Burnout 3* even better. And really, who wouldn't want to engage in a competition in which the goal is to drive full speed through a crowded intersection and cause the most horrible wreck known to man?

Pub. EA Games **Dev.** Criterion **Release** October

RATCHET & CLANK: UP YOUR ARSENAL

RATCHET SHOWS YOU WHERE TO SHOVE YOUR GUNS

One of the most innovative online experiences we saw at E3 wasn't, strictly speaking, innovative at all. In fact, it was fairly standard first-person-shooter deathmatching with an obvious nod to *Halo*'s multiplayer mode: two-person vehicles, ultra-long-range sniper rifles, unusual gadgets, and gameplay modes such as assault and capture the flag. Reasonably familiar stuff, in general.

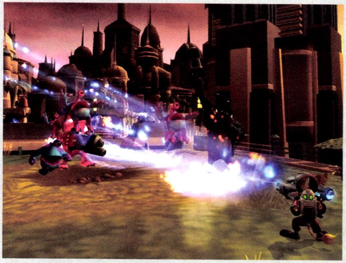
Except it wasn't a first-person shooter at all. It was *Ratchet & Clank: Up Your Arsenal.*

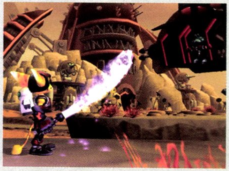
Don't worry, the folks at Insomniac haven't lost their minds and decided to completely rework their enormously successful platform formula. They just added online play in a move that seems fairly obvious in retrospect—definitely a "why hasn't anyone done this before?" sort of thing.

As odd as it may seem to be playing a platformer deathmatch, all it takes is a few rounds to become a believer. You can hop into a two-person ground or air vehicle and zip around the expansive battlefields. You can grab a group of automated drones to cover your back. You can walk upside down under bridges with the help of your gravity boots (yes, many of the best gadgets in the single-player mode make an appearance online) and pop out of hiding to put a cap in your friend's ass. You can even destroy large portions of most levels—which means that you'll need to be really careful when choosing a well-protected sniper point, if that's your thing.

And don't worry—the team isn't skimping on the offline gameplay. Expect the single-player mode to be every bit as extensive as in *Going Commando*, only with more gadgets, upgrades, vehicles, playable characters, and even better graphics. Two games in one? Sign us up!

Pub. Sony CEA **Dev.** Insomniac **Release** November





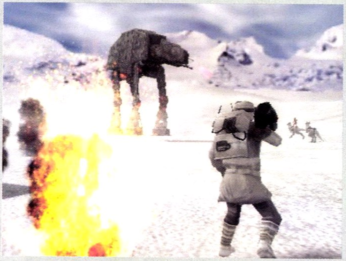
ANIMAL PEEPS
Our favorite anthropomorphic stories? Orwell's *Animal Farm* and anything starring Howard the Duck.

STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT

8 REASONS WHY THIS GAME IS GOING TO ROCK

Some highlights of our recent time spent playing *Star Wars Battlefront*: 1) You can shoot Ewoks. Hell, you could shoot all of them. 2) You can be a Wookiee, sling a bowcaster, and make that awesome noise. 3) You can land next to another player in a snowspeeder on Hoth, he can jump in the back, and you two can go take down AT-ATs. 4) You can ride speeder bikes and whiz through the trees with seven pals. 5) We haven't seen it yet, but a LucasArts dude promises humongous X-wing versus TIE fighter battles, with 32 ships all zipping around blasting each other. Human players can pilot up to 16 ships, and the remaining 16 (or more, if necessary, balance the map) can be controlled by your PS2. 6) The increasingly excited LucasArts dude also told us about "special" characters that can be summoned by a team to help them in their efforts. Depending on which of the four sides you're playing as, once you're really kicking ass, you can summon Darth Vader, Luke Skywalker, Count Dooku, or Mace Windu to stomp onto the battlefield and bust out mad Jedi moves for you. They can't be killed—if any of them take too much damage, they retreat. 7) AT-ATs are giant walking spawn points. As they lumber toward their target on Hoth, any Imperial teammate that gets killed will respawn wherever the AT-AT currently is. The closer to the Rebel base, the better. 8) Did we mention you can shoot Ewoks?

Pub. LucasArts **Dev.** Pandemic **Release** November



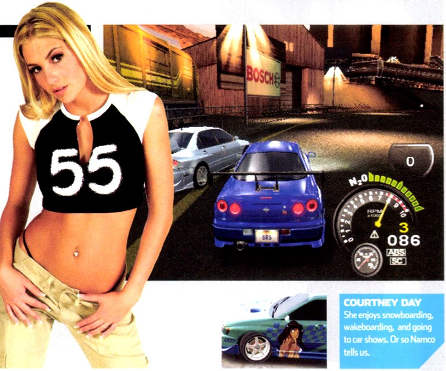
TAUNTING FUN
See those Tauntauns in the distance? You can hop on one and ride it to your heart's content!

SRS

DELICIOUSLY EVIL ONLINE FEATURE

Namco has yet to fully show its hand on what is planned for *SRS'* online modes, but we have managed to twist the company's arm and learn a few cool details. As you'd expect, all the most popular types of races will be available online, and you'll be able to enjoy the freedom that the open game structure offers, much as you can with *Midnight Club 2*'s online options. So far, so predictable. Seeing that there are 97 different street-racing games coming out in the next six months, all of them boasting "unprecedented online modes" on their websites, we would expect no less from Namco. So do they have anything new and different? Well, yeah. *SRS'* coolest aspect is how far it takes its gambling element. Throughout the game, you can place wagers on races, whether this is cash from your wallet or, more interestingly, your pride and joy, your very whip itself. Bet your wheels on an online race and lose, and you'll have to weather the shame of being a complete and total loser. Plus, when the game transfers ownership of the car, it also deletes it from your memory card. All that time and virtual cash you've put into the paint job, mods, decals, and personalization—gone. Isn't that just the most deliciously evil thing? Let's hope that Eutechnyx has worked out a way to stop people from cheating, possibly by tagging cars to user names so that they can't make duplicates.

Pub. Namco **Dev.** Eutechnyx **Release** Fall



COURTNEY DAY
She enjoys snowboarding, wakeboarding, and going to car shows. Or so Namco tells us.

AREA 51

GET MUTATED ON THE INTERWEB

***Area 51* already looks promising,** thanks to a dash of *Half-Life* (or *Halo*, depending on your perspective) thrown into an otherwise-solid shooter. The smart use of scripted events, the presence of military A.I. buddies, and the ubiquity of alien zombies all make for an intriguing mix. OK, it's quite different than the old days of using a lightgun to shoot aliens over and over in the arcade, but it honestly looks better now as a shooter. It's also pretty cool that Justin Chin, one of the key minds behind the brilliant *Jedi Knight: Dark Forces II* on PC, was brought in as a consulting designer.

Once you're done purging Area 51 of UFOs and weird, big-headed gray aliens, you can hop online for some good old-fashioned shootery. The confirmed modes for now are deathmatch, team deathmatch, and capture the flag, with support for up to 16 players. Nothing really fancy, but considering how solid and surprising the rest of the game is, the multiplayer will probably feel just as smooth and reliable. Besides, you don't need to completely reinvent the wheel to make fun shooting matches online.

The grooviest addition is knowing that mutations are also going to be a part of the online play. It's one thing to see soldiers and whatnot shooting at each other, but it's just plain cool to have players suddenly become alien man-beasts and bust out with weird weapons such as parasites or enormous claws. Whether the mutations are treated as inherent weapons or as power-ups remains to be seen.

Pub. Midway **Dev.** Inevitable **Release** October

ready? engage!
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PHANTOM CRASH 2050

MECHS AND CAT A.I. ONLINE!

While your Xbox friends are all aflutter over *MechAssault* and its forthcoming sequel, you can finally resolve your feelings of mechanical inadequacy when *Phantom Crash 2050* (the follow-up to Xbox's *Phantom Crash*) comes crashing to your PS2. OK, so "scoobees" sounds a lot sillier than "battlemechs," but who cares about the name when you're in a giant machine that walks around on two legs?

Since robot fighting is treated as a sport (much like battlebots today), the online arena setup uses a sportier elimination-round style of play instead of a deathmatch/respawn kind of game. Eight players enter the arena, but only four are actively playing in a free-for-all. When one of the four gets wrecked, rather than respawn, he loses his spot, and one of the remaining four on the sidelines will then jump in as a replacement. If you don't quite feel up to getting smashed up in an online game, you can practice with a buddy in the two-player splitscreen mode.

Another slick feature is being able to totally customize your robotic ride. Winnings you earn in the single-player game can be applied to your multiplayer character, and you can deck out your scoobee with all sorts of guns and enhancements (our favorite is the optical camouflage that makes you invisible, Predator style). Hopefully, there will be a way for match creators to set scoobee limits so that decked-out players don't stomp all over stock machines.

Pub. Konami **Dev.** Genki **Release** February 2005

MORE ONLINE
We can't write about every online-enabled game, but here's a handy cheat sheet for you to cut out and carry with you to the store when looking for some Internet action.

- ATV Offroad Fury 3
- Battlefield: Modern Combat
- Call of Duty: Finest Hour
- Champions: Return to Arms
- Crash'N'Burn
- Darkwatch
- Enthusia
- ESPN games
- Final Fantasy XI: Chains of Promathia
- Godzilla: Save The Earth
- Gran Turismo 4
- Heroes of the Pacific
- Hot Shots Golf Fore!
- Killzone
- Midway
- Monster Hunter
- Mortal Kombat: Deception
- Nobunaga's Ambition Online
- Outlaw Golf 2
- Resident Evil Outbreak File #2
- Rise of the Kasai
- Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon 2

OK TO PLAY?

E-M?

ARE YOU A PARENT? THEN PAY ATTENTION!

In Issue #81, we brought you a feature that outlined some of the challenges facing the Entertainment Software Rating Board and described how the group assigns a rating to a game. Since running the story, *OPM* has received a lot of mail asking about the ratings process and, in particular, why raters don't actually play the games before making their judgments (see "How is a game rated?" for the answer). To shed some light on the subject, Patricia Vance, president of the ESRB, took us deeper into the belly of the organization.

The ESRB has been applauded for its work so far, with Sen. Joe Lieberman, a man with a notoriously conservative view when it comes to anything videogame related, going so far as to describe it as "the best entertainment rating system in the United States." With this kind of applause, what are the remaining problems that Vance and her team face? "Well, our research shows us that 87 percent of the time, parents are present during the process of buying or renting a game," she begins. "So how are M-rated games getting into the hands of kids? That's our biggest problem right now. The challenge is to educate both parents and retailers about the ratings and what they mean. It's definitely a generational thing. Younger parents who grew up playing videogames understand the system, but there are still a lot of parents out there who just don't grasp what their kids are playing."

> "HOW ARE M-RATED GAMES GETTING INTO THE HANDS OF KIDS?"

Ratings aren't an unusual factor when it comes to entertainment, though, with movie ratings being particularly well known. Has there ever been discussion of merging the systems into one entertainment rating organization that everyone understands? "Yes, there's been discussion, but gaming is quite different," Vance informs us. "The MPAA [Motion Picture Association of America, the body that rates movies] has been around for 30 or 40 years, and we've been around for only 10. They had challenges early on, just as we have, but one advantage they had was that theater owners were a part of the organization and helped promote and enforce the movie ratings."

Promotion is something that the ESRB has gotten very good at. Its awareness programs have included the Tiger Woods TV campaign, a successful series of print ads, and a huge in-store program that includes awareness signage and retail training. "Retailers are really embracing the system," Vance tells us. "A lot of them have register prompts, which means that when a bar code is scanned, it puts up a message on the screen that lets clerks know that they need to bring the rating of the game to the customer's attention. We have more and more signage, too, with our 'OK to Play' campaign proving very successful."

"About 85,000 store associates have seen our materials as part of training in the past six months. We distributed a quiz for them to take, and we've incorporated our information into many retailer employee-training programs. Stores like Wal-Mart, Best Buy, and Toys "R" Us are all working with us on this stuff."

"Any ratings standard is a judgment call; the key is for us to be consistent," Vance explains. "You can agree or disagree with a rating, but it's content descriptors that are more useful for parents. The rating is a general guideline, but the additional info is very specific. We need to get the word out there so that parents pay attention to what their kids are playing." «

HOW IS A GAME RATED?

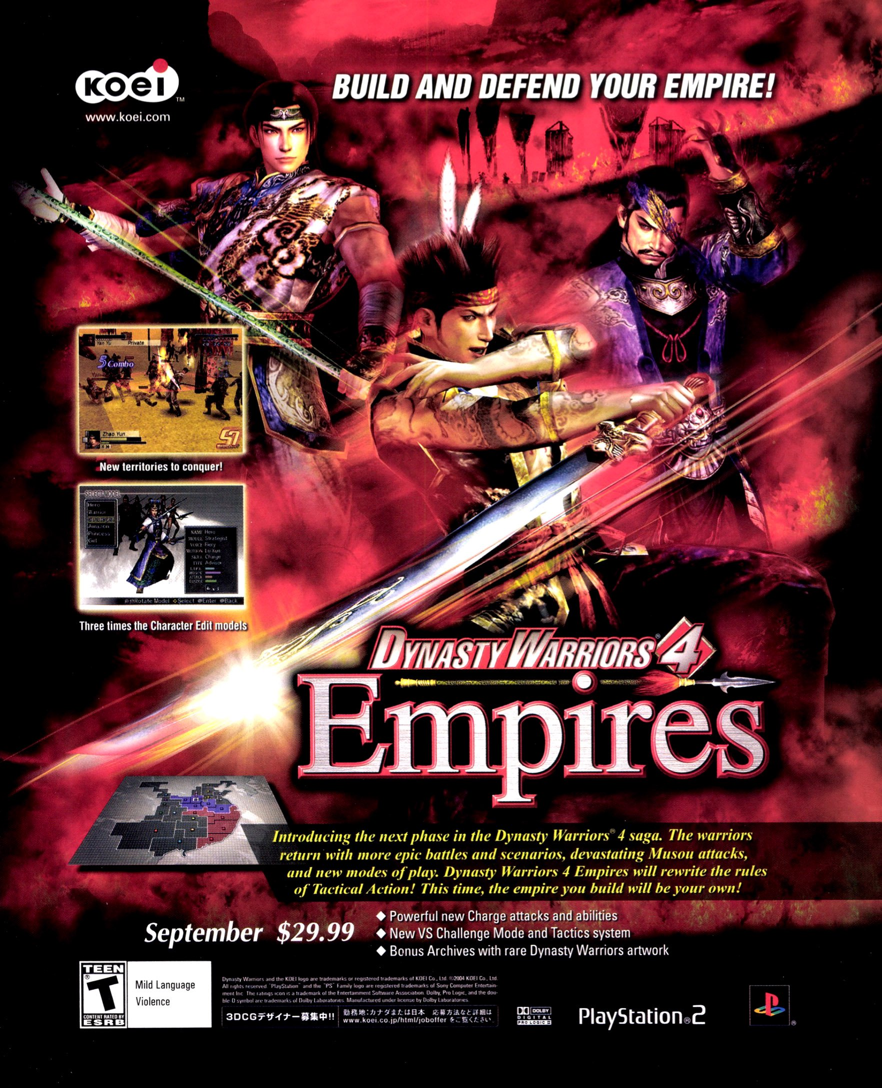
"First, there's a lengthy submission form that publishers have to fill out," says Vance. "This *has* to be accompanied by a video on which they submit the most extreme content. The submission form sets up the game for the raters and describes the content of both the game and any movie sequences.

"There's always a minimum of three raters per product, and they all look at the documentation and then view the video scene by scene. We look for a consensus of opinion from them, and we ask people to assign what they think the rating should be. Our criteria for raters are that we want them to be over 21 and have some experience with kids. It's not important whether they are gamers or not...."

Why do they watch video and not play the games? With an interactive medium, isn't it important for the raters to, well, you know...interact? "With games mostly having upwards of 50 hours of gameplay these days, it's just not practical," Vance concedes. "The raters are looking at content, and this isn't a qualitative judgment call. They're looking at the content provided by the publishers and assigning labels to that content."

But doesn't that put all the control in the hands of the publishers? It's open to some abuse, surely. "Yes, but when a product is submitted, they are obligated to a set of principles and guidelines along with a code of conduct. These include everything from where the product descriptors should be placed on the packaging to where an M-rated game can be advertised. Publishers are all subject to a set of practices that are fully enforced by the ESRB. If a publisher violates the code of conduct, then we have a number of options open to us. There are three basic classes of violation, and these are anything from marking a product wrong to inappropriately targeting an M-rated product by, say, putting an ad in an inappropriate place."

What if a publisher just chooses not to disclose content that might cause problems? "We also get copies of final code after a product has shipped, which our in-house rating department will play. At this point, if something is spotted and needs to be changed, there are a number of courses of action open to the publisher. They can take corrective action with the product, which is potentially very expensive, or they can resticker the box with an adjusted rating. If mistakes are made, they tend to not be intentional. It just doesn't happen often because of the ramifications. We also have the option to just not rate something. Retail wants games to be rated, so we have that as a form of enforcement. For most places, no rating means the game won't be stocked."



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Violence

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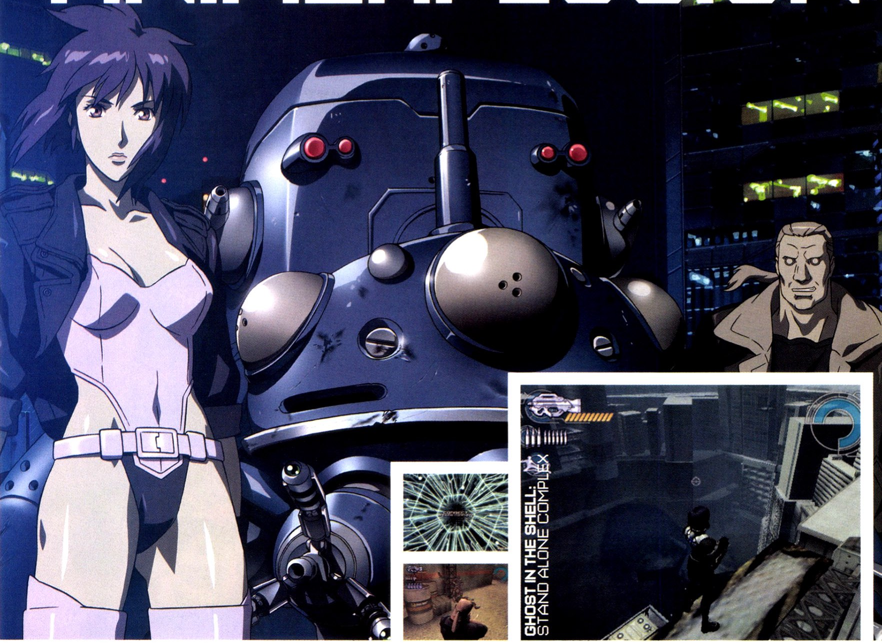
ANIMEXPLOSION

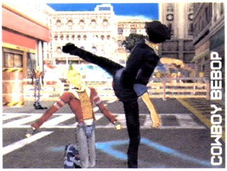


THE BIG BOYS (AND GALS) OF ANIME HIT YOUR PS2

While gaming and anime are filled with children's fluff, there are some really good shows that aim quite a bit higher. Despite the preponderance of *Pokémon, Digimon,* or other shows with "mon" in their titles, many quality shows are now becoming honest-to-god good-looking games.

Cowboy Bebop is clearly the biggest nonkids anime in the market right now. It premiered with Cartoon Network's Adult Swim lineup, and even though it was only 26 episodes long, those episodes have been in constant rotation for the past four years. Director Shinichiro Watanabe, after directing *Macross Plus,* decided to create an anime series that integrated his love of jazz and *Dirty Harry* movies, among other things, and the result was *Cowboy Bebop,* a sci-fi space Western/noir series. *Cowboy Bebop*'s simple premise of "episodic hijinks of bounty hunters in space" translates extremely well to a game. Sure enough, in the game, you're going after a wide variety of bounties, playing as one of three main characters: Spike (laid-back drifter with a gangster past), Jet (retired cop with a cybernetic arm), or Faye (a con artist recently revived from cryogenic freezing). Much like the show, the game will be filled with all sorts of martial arts and gun-shooting hijinks. Since the 26-episode run had only about five episodes constituting a story arc, with the rest of the series being purely episodic, it was relatively easy for the developers to fit the game into the show's continuity. We haven't heard if Watanabe himself is involved (he's probably too busy with his current show, *Samurai Champloo*), but the game features Toshihiro Kawamoto's character designs and Yoko Kanno's famous jazz-based soundtrack.

Bandai has also picked up the *Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex* game. Yes, that same *Ghost in the Shell,* which, along with *Akira,* pretty much defined sci-fi anime back in the late '80s and early '90s. Like the original movie, the show centers on Major Motoko Kusanagi and Public Safety Section Nine, a government force tasked with fighting cyberterrorism (basically, terrorism that involves robots or hackers). The show usually features the Major and her partner, Batou, either hacking into bad guys' brains or



shooting up areas—the main challenge of the game is figuring out just how to implement all the cool tricks the Major can pull off in the show. Since the game isn't coming for a while, you can pick up the first DVD of the 26-episode run (hitting shelves around the same time you read this) to get psyched. (You don't *need* to watch *Ghost in the Shell* to understand *SAC,* but we recommend it, just for the heck of it.) Also, the actual movie sequel, *Ghost in the Shell: Innocence*, is hitting theaters soon, but since that takes place after *SAC*, it also isn't necessary viewing for understanding the game; we just recommend that movie on principle.

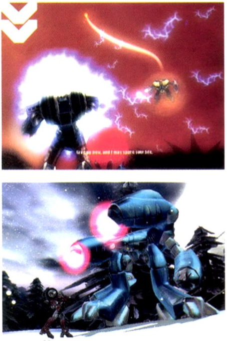
These are just two of the shows making the transition to games, but they are the biggest ones to make the jump. As licensed games start to get better, we're optimistic about game versions of these two stellar series. «

Cowboy Bebop **Pub.** Bandai **Dev.** Bandai **Release** October

Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex **Pub.** Bandai **Dev.** Cavia **Release** November

GET MORE ANIME!

ANIME SEQUELS ABOUND



Robotech: Invasion

Inuyasha

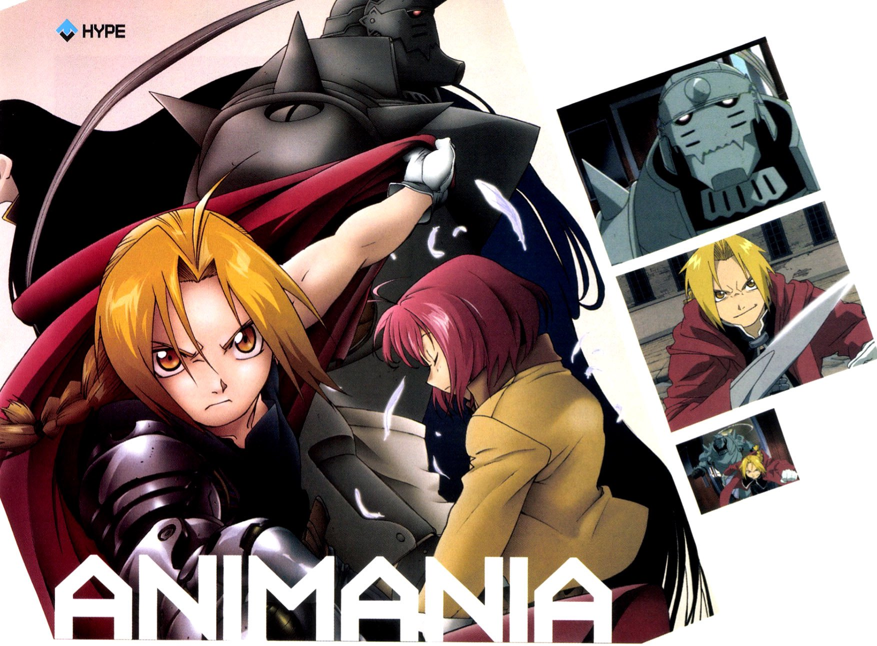
Full Metal Alchemist

SD Gundam Force

Gundam Battle Assault 3

Besides the two big-league shows getting new games, plenty of other anime game franchises are getting new installments. Robotech: Invasion promises to be a better game than Robotech: Battle Cry and even goes in a new direction—taking place during the Invid saga (the tail end of the Robotech series) rather than the Macross saga that Battle Cry occurred in. What this translates to is no more transforming planes but plenty of transforming motorcycles. Diehard mecha fans also have two separate Gundam games, Gundam Battle Assault 3 and SD Gundam Force, to look forward to.

On the RPG front, you also have the traditional Inuyasha RPG and Square Enix's action-RPG Full Metal Alchemist (you can just flip the page to read more about FMA).



ANIMANIA

WILL YOU FALL IN LOVE WITH A BIKINI-CLAD ALIEN SOCIOPATH?

FULL METAL MULTIMEDIA

In case you missed the news from E3, Square Enix and Funimation are teaming up to bring *Full Metal Alchemist* to North America. The TV series will hit Cartoon Network this October, paving the way for DVDs to follow and a PlayStation 2 game in the spring of 2005.

Alchemist chronicles the adventures of Edward Elric, a wandering alchemical magician with an arm and a leg that have been turned to steel, and his kid brother Alphonse, whose child soul is trapped inside a hulking suit of armor. Their respective transformations are the consequence of an ill-advised alchemical experiment in which they attempted to bring their mother back from the dead, and so they're off in search of the Philosopher's Stone, the only artifact capable of returning them to fully human form.

The TV series is just about the hottest thing going in Japan right now. In *Animage* magazine's recent annual readers poll, it swept every single category—favorite male lead (for Edward Elric), favorite female lead (for Liza Hawkeye), favorite theme song (for Porno Graffiti's "Melissa"), favorite voice actor (for Romi Paku, the voice of Edward), and, of course, favorite episode and favorite series.

BEAKS VS. CLAWS
Big *Gatchaman* fans will want to find a copy of the comic book *Battle of the Planets/Thundercats*, which faces off the birdmen against the cat people.

LONG-FORGOTTEN DREAM

Central Park Media's backlist is making it out on DVD ever so slowly, but the month of June marks a big step forward. On June 8, the classic *Urusei Yatsura 2: Beautiful Dreamer* comes out as a special collector's edition, featuring a full-length commentary track from director Mamoru Oshii, trailers of the first two *Urusei Yatsura* movies, and a digitally remastered picture that is, by all accounts, fantastic. *Beautiful Dreamer* improbably proves that a love story between a hopeless loser and an alien sociopath in a tiger-striped bikini can work as a serious film, so check it out and see what hooked an earlier generation on Japanese animation.

SCIENCE NINJA TEAM

In addition to newer titles like the *Full Metal Panic* sequel series and the popular *Peacemaker*, ADV Films has picked up the rights to the entire old-school *Gatchaman* TV series. Yes, that's what you watched back in the day as *Battle of the Planets* or *G-Force*. ADV plans to release the entire series uncut on bilingual DVD (although a release date hasn't been set as of yet), and the dubbed version will wind up on cable TV through the gradually expanding Anime Network.

DEAD AND DEADER

After announcing plans to bring it over earlier this year, Manga Video has set a date for *Dead Leaves*, the latest bit of ultraviolent insanity from an increasingly prolific Production IG. Developed in conjunction with graphic artist Imaitoonz, it's 50 minutes of madness following two unlikely heroes as they bust out of a top-secret prison-cum-cloning facility in someplace that almost, but not quite, resembles modern Tokyo. Manga calls it an "abstract modern-art car crash," and we see no reason to dispute the point. The DVD, due out August 24, will pack in 5.1-channel surround sound, a 16:9 anamorphic widescreen picture, and 50 minutes of supplementary features.

DETECTIVE BOY...ER, JIMMY

You can catch *Detective Boy Conan* on the tube as *Case Closed*, but collectors should watch for the recently announced DVD releases. Funimation has two volumes on their way out at the end of August—also under the *Case Closed* moniker, in case you miss it on the racks—complete with subtitles and Japanese dialogue if you prefer it that way. All 52 episodes will eventually come out on television and DVD, so expect to get all the *Conan* you can stand over the coming year. «

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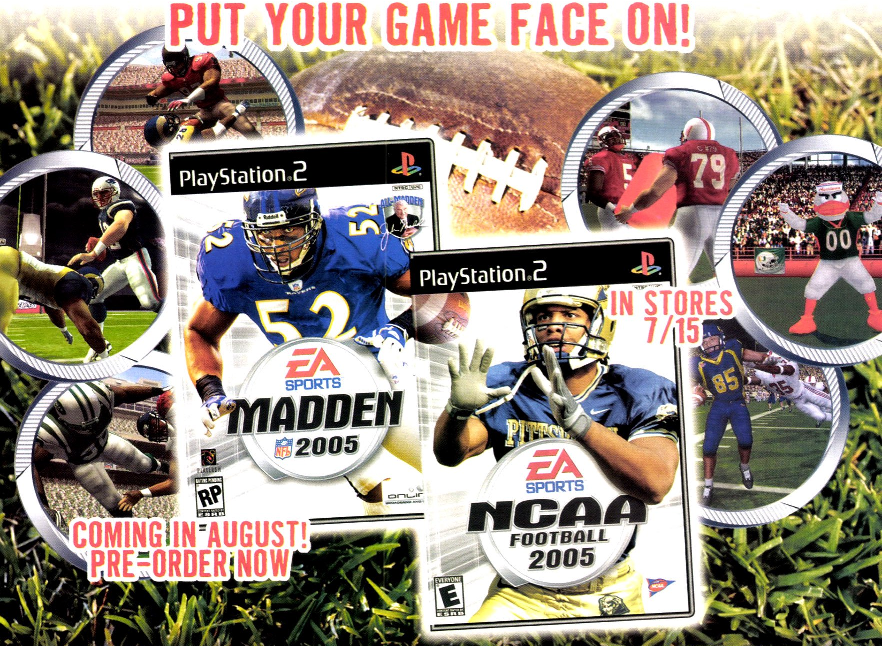
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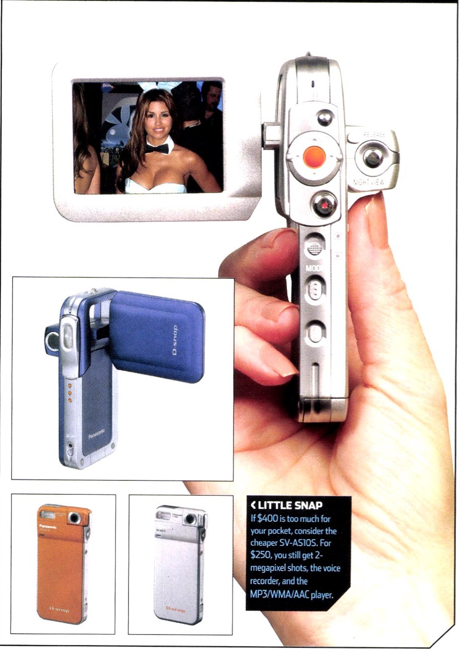
THE LIST

POCKET ROCKET

PANASONIC D-SNAP SV-AV50S

Oh sweet lord, someone hold us back. It records MPEG-4 video at 30 frames per second. It takes photos at resolutions of up to 1600x1200 pixels. It plays MP3s and AACs. It records digital audio. It plays back digital video. And at less than an inch thick, it's about the size of a pack of cigarettes. It's also a penny under $400, but with specs like that, can you blame them? If the photo resolution and video size were increased a bit, we would probably perish from an overload of desire.



‹ LITTLE SNAP

If $400 is too much for your pocket, consider the cheaper SV-AS10S. For $250, you still get 2-megapixel shots, the voice recorder, and the MP3/WMA/AAC player.

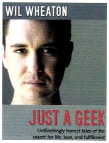
HAPPY! HAPPY! JOY! JOY!

REN & STIMPY TOYS

Yeah, we know *The Ren & Stimpy Show* hasn't been anything special since 1992. But for those of us who still hold fond memories of the show before Nickelodeon fired John Kricfalusi for being too crude with his direction of the series (later proven true by the duo's hard-to-watch Spike TV adventures), Palisades' line of action figures is a breath of fresh air even sweeter than a Powered Toast Man fart. Series One includes Ren, Stimpy, Shaven Yak, and Mr. Horse. Yessir, we like it!

WIL POWER

JUST A GEEK


WIL WHEATON
JUST A GEEK
Unflinchingly honest tales of the search for life, love, and fulfillment

Wil Wheaton is from space *and* the future. As Ensign Wesley Crusher on *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (and the main character in the excellent coming-of-age flick *Stand by Me*), he got off to a powerful start in Hollywood...but then his career, like those of many young actors, began to suffer from the child-actor curse. In this heart-wrenching book, Wil talks candidly about his time in Starfleet—and the impact his early stardom has had on his life to this day.

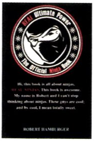
ONE WORD: THERAPY

METALLICA: SOME KIND OF MONSTER

Dramatic exit by disgruntled bassist? Check. Rehab clinic for lead singer? Check. Public war waged against dot-com company? Check. Metal band in group therapy? Check. Veteran documentarists Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky spent three years filming the ups and downs of Metallica as they struggled to make *St. Anger*, their first studio album in five years; the end result is this humorous and moving film. More than a real-life *Spinal Tap*, it must be seen to be believed.

COOL = TOTALLY SWEET

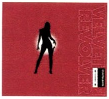
REAL ULTIMATE POWER


REAL Ultimate Power
The Official Ninja Book
Hi, this book is all about ninjas, REAL NINJAS. This book is awesome. My name is Robert and I can't stop thinking about ninjas. These guys are cool; and by cool, I mean totally sweet.
ROBERT HAMBURGER

From the cover: "Hi, this book is all about ninjas, REAL NINJAS. This book is awesome. My name is Robert and I can't stop thinking about ninjas. These guys are cool; and by cool I mean totally sweet." From the author: "Basic reasons why you should buy *Real Ultimate Power*: 1. It will teach you about ninjas. 2. Ninjas are awesome." The brainchild of realultimatepower.net editor and utterly insane freak Robert Hamburger, this book will be available in July for only $9.95.

SWEET BAND O' MINE

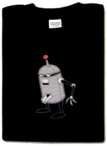
VELVET REVOLVER: CONTRABAND



If you haven't heard already, Axl Rose has a serious case of the crazies, which dashes any hope of a Guns N' Roses reunion any time soon. But fear not, GNR fans, because Velvet Revolver is the next best thing. Former GNR members Slash, Duff, and Matt have joined up with onetime Stone Temple Pilots frontman Scott Weiland to form Velvet Revolver. Its first album, *Contraband*, even hit stores before *Chinese Democracy*. Take that Axl!

FROM ZERO TO DRUNK IN 20 DOLLARS

PENNY ARCADE SWAG



Do you like to make with the videogame ha-ha? Then you surely must know about Penny Arcade. Now you can show your support for these greats of videogame comicry by visiting the Penny Arcade store at www.thinkgeek.com. Proudly display PA faves Div, Cardboard Tube Samurai, and the Fruit F---er 2000 across your chest. Right now you can buy one of five T-shirts for $17.99, a hooded sweatshirt for $33.99, or a PA logo mug for $8.99. Expect even more designs soon.

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BY THE NUMBERS

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PS2 TOP 20 SALES

Inspired by *Red Dead Revolver*, the *OPM* office has taken to practicing its quick draws, although we don't have guns, so we have to use our game pads as substitutes. All together now: We. Are. Losers.

Howdy, pardner—I'm fixin' to shoot you now.

	Title (Publisher)	
1	Red Dead Revolver (Rockstar)	●●●●
2	Samurai Warriors (Koei/EA)	●●●●
3	Transformers (Atari)	●●●◖
4	Onimusha 3: Demon Siege (Capcom)	●●●●◖
5	Fight Night 2004 (EA Sports)	●●●●
6	NBA Ballers (Midway Sports)	●●●●
7	Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain (SCEA)	●●●
8	La Pucelle: Tactics (Mastiff)	●●●●
9	MVP Baseball 2004 (EA Sports)	●●●●◖
10	Hitman: Contracts (Eidos)	●●●●◖
11	Van Helsing (Vivendi Universal)	●●●◖
12	Shrek 2 (Activision)	●●●◖
13	ESPN Major League Baseball (Sega)	●●●◖
14	DDRMAX 2 (Konami)	●●●●
15	Resident Evil: Outbreak (Capcom)	●●●◖
16	Final Fantasy XI w/ HDD (Square Enix)	●●●●●
17	FIFA Soccer 2004 (EA Sports)	●●●●●
18	NBA Street Vol. 2 (EA Sports Big)	●●●●●
19	MLB 2005 (SCEA)	●●●◖
20	All-Star Baseball 2005 (Acclaim)	●●◖

3 Transformers

10 Hitman: Contracts

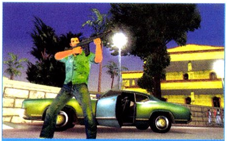
12 Shrek 2

13 ESPN Major League Baseball

Source: EB Games, May 2004. Numbers reflect the sales at EB and its affiliated outlets and don't include other retail outlets. That's probably why you'll never see *Deer Hunter* crack the top 10. Japan's top 10 and the top 10 rentals come from other sources. Game descriptions written by the *OPM* staff. Hut-Hut sources: CNN, Guinness World Records, Pros and Cons: The Criminals Who Play in the NFL.

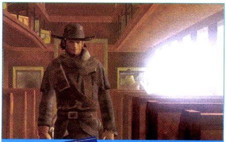
PS1 TOP 10 SALES

1	Final Fantasy VII	Square Enix
2	Final Fantasy Anthology	Square Enix
3	Final Fantasy Chronicles	Square Enix
4	Final Fantasy Origins	Square Enix
5	Final Fantasy Tactics	Square Enix
6	Final Fantasy VIII	Square Enix
7	Final Fantasy IX	Square Enix
8	Dr. Seuss: The Cat in the Hat	Jack of All Games
9	Dragon Ball Z: Ultimate Battle 22	Atari
10	Chrono Cross	Square EA



JAPAN'S TOP 10 PS2 GAMES

1	Super Robot Wars MS	Banpresto
2	Pachi-slot Hokuto no Ken	Sammy
3	Grand Theft Auto: Vice City	Capcom
4	Pachi-slot Toukon Densho: Inoki-sai	Success
5	Derby Stallion 04	Enterbrain
6	Atelier Iris	Gust
7	Tensei Gakuen Gensoroku	Asmik Ace
8	Dragon Quest V	Square Enix
9	Densha de Go! Final	Taito
10	Galactic Wrestling: Feat. Ultimate Muscle	Bandai



TOP 10 BLOCKBUSTER RENTALS

1	Red Dead Revolver (PS2)	Rockstar
2	Red Dead Revolver (XB)	Rockstar
3	NBA Ballers (PS2)	Midway Sports
4	Hitman: Contracts (PS2)	Eidos
5	Van Helsing (PS2)	Vivendi Universal
6	Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain (PS2)	SCEA
7	Transformers (PS2)	Atari
8	Fight Night 2004 (PS2)	EA Sports
9	All-Star Baseball 2005 (PS2)	Acclaim
10	Shrek 2 (PS2)	Activision

TOP 10 SALES, ALL SYSTEMS

1	Red Dead Revolver (PS2)	Rockstar
2	Red Dead Revolver (XB)	Rockstar
3	City of Heroes (PC)	NCsoft
4	Samurai Warriors (PS2)	Koei/EA
5	Transformers (PS2)	Atari
6	Onimusha 3: Demon Siege (PS2)	Capcom
7	Fight Night 2004 (PS2)	EA Sports
8	NBA Ballers (PS2)	Midway Sports
9	Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain (PS2)	SCEA
10	RalliSport Challenge 2 (XB)	Microsoft

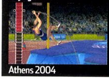
TREND SPOTTER

Fishermen do it. Strippers do it. And now, so do gamers. Pole swinging is the latest craze sweeping your PS2, as is evidenced by the screens below.

Devil May Cry 3

Bujingai

BloodRayne 2

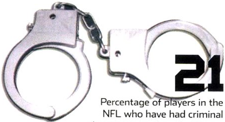


Athens 2004

Hitman: Contracts

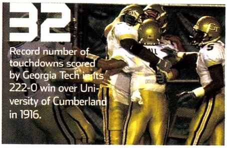
HUT-HUT!

The gridiron by the numbers.



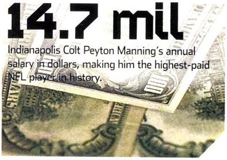
21

Percentage of players in the NFL who have had criminal charges pressed against them.



32

Record number of touchdowns scored by Georgia Tech in its 222-0 win over University of Cumberland in 1916.



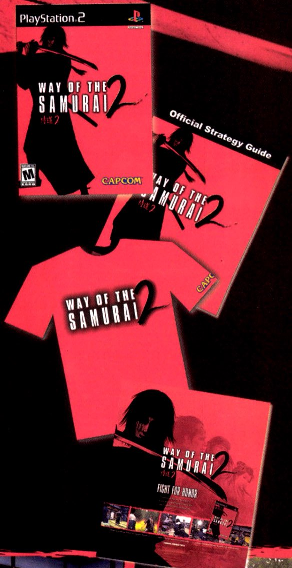
14.7 mil

Indianapolis Colt Peyton Manning's annual salary in dollars, making him the highest-paid NFL player in history.

OPM PRESENTS

WAY OF THE SAMURAI 2

侍道 2



PlayStation 2
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Blood
Strong Language
Violence

Spike ACQUIRE PlayStation 2 CAPCOM

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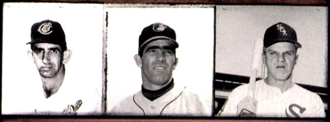

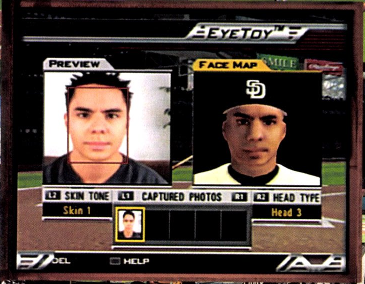

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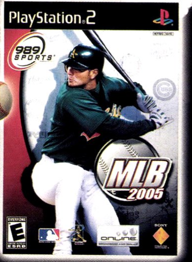
R2 HEAD TYPE
Head 3
DEL
HELP



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100 DVDs

PERIPHERALS
99 Max Drive

[●●●●●]

RATING KEY

Octagons. Stomps. Ocs. Blargs. Call our rating symbols what you will—just know that any game that receives five of 'em is something truly special that deserves a spot in your collection. On the other hand, a 2.5 is merely mediocre. And a 0.5? Well...at least they're fun to rip apart.

OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE
[★]
GAME OF THE MONTH

MADDEN NFL 2005

GO TO THE GRIDIRON

As we enter the lean summer months, the pickings get a little slim. EA's stellar football franchises, *Madden* in particular, came through to provide us with some great gameplay. Which was all the more appreciated considering that *DRIV3R*...well, let's just say it was everything we hoped it wouldn't be. For more details, you'll have to read the review.

TOTAL DOMINANCE

NOW IN ITS 15TH SEASON, THE VETERAN *MADDEN* SHOWS NO SIGNS IT'S LOSING A STEP

RAVENS
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By Chris Baker
With David Simutis and Todd Zuniga

Located in Canton, OH, the National Football League Hall of Fame honors all of the legends of the game. Montana. Thorpe. Largent. Unitas. Brown. Payton. *Madden.*

No, not *John* Madden, the legendary Raiders coach and broadcaster—he still has yet to get his much-deserved personal due. Rather, sitting in the Hall is a nice, shiny copy of *Madden NFL 2004*. A videogame.

Actually, it's more than a videogame.

Madden NFL 2005 marks the 15th year of the venerable franchise, and in that time, the series truly has grown—much like the man himself—larger than life. Nearly 37 million copies have been sold since 1989, and in recent years, very few titles (if any) challenge the latest edition of *Madden* as the best-selling game of the year.

And it's only getting bigger.

Madden has become such a force, in fact, it's not uncommon to see television specials about it. Or to hear it mentioned in a movie. Or to read how a breakthrough band attributes its success to having a song in the game.

For anyone who can't remember a time before videogames, *Madden* has solidified itself as a staple of American culture. Whether you call yourself a gamer or not.

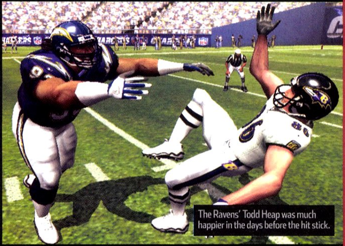
Photo from Corbis/Outline

DEFENSE

Defense wins championships, the old saying goes. But most *Madden* players would disagree. "Last year, we saw a lot of games being played into the 50s and 60s," says Tiburon Supervising Producer Jeremy Strauser, "so we're trying to balance it." This year, anyone you ask—from Tiburon employees to John Madden or cover athlete Ray Lewis—will tell you they're most proud of the audibles the team is calling in order make some defensive adjustments. "We've put a lot of things under the hood," General Manager Steve Chiang tells us. Things like...

THE HIT STICK

By pressing the right analog stick—the "hit stick"—in the proper direction at the right time, "you're able to deliver a bigger tackle than by pressing dive or Circle," says Strauser. "It's a way that defense can really change the tempo of a game—they can cause more turnovers. It's a risk/reward thing, too, so you can totally take yourself out of a play if you just go around trying to hit stick the whole time."



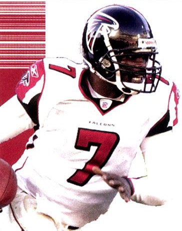
The Ravens' Todd Heap was much happier in the days before the hit stick.

NEW DEFENSIVE PLAYMAKER CONTROLS

Last year, Playmaker control was next to useless on defense. Now, by using the right analog before a snap, you can change the assignment of any player to hook zone, blitz, flat zone, or QB spy. "He might think I'm blitzing, but it's actually prevent," points out Assistant Producer Ian Cummings. On a related note, a new coverage audible makes double coverage of Randy Moss or Terrell Owens all the easier to accomplish

SUBTLE ASSISTANCE

Just playing defense itself has always been tough in *Madden*, and Tiburon knows it. "We've noticed a lot of people don't always pick the best angle [to tackle a ball carrier]," says Strauser, "so we've added an 'assist' so that even if they're facing the wrong angle, they'll be brought to the best angle. It's not taking away any control, and it's real subtle—but it's there. You wouldn't know it unless we tell you to look for it."



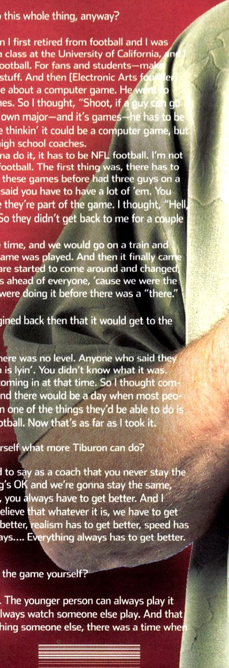
STOPPING VICK

In *Madden 2004*, Mike Vick was unstoppable. All you had to do was send a few Falcons deep, wait for the backs to pursue them, and run the game's cover athlete to either side of the field. The usual result: a first down—and then some.

In the new game, he certainly remains a weapon, but Tiburon has done its best to ensure that the Falcons can't simply Vick you to defeat. "We put in some new contain logic for our ends," says Jeremy Strauser. "We talked to defensive line coaches about Mike Vick, and they all roll their eyes. What they're doing now is a kind of contain rush, and the whole point is to keep him in the pocket. You'll see that in *Madden 2005* a lot—we have a lot of contain-type plays."

the MAN

JOHN MADDEN TALKS TRAIN RIDES, RAY LEWIS, AND HAVING MEETINGS WITH HIMSELF



No other man alive personifies videogame football better than John Madden. But how did his line of pigskin games come to be? What does he think of the NFL these days? Who does he see winning it all this year? We asked him about pretty much everything except hardware stores and athlete's foot remedies (which, to be honest, we're kind of regretting now).

OPM How did you get into this whole thing, anyway?

JOHN MADDEN When I first retired from football and I was doing some teaching, I had a class at the University of California, and I thought that I would teach football. For fans and students—make some tools for coaches and stuff. And then [Electronic Arts founder] Trip Hawkins came to see me about a computer game. He went to Harvard and majored in games. So I thought, "Shoot, if a guy can go to Harvard and make up his own major—and it's games—he has to be something." And so we were thinkin' it could be a computer game, but it could be used for maybe high school coaches.

So my thing is, if I'm gonna do it, it has to be NFL football. I'm not interested in other types of football. The first thing was, there has to be 22 guys, because a lot of these games before had three guys on a team, six guys on a team—I said you have to have a lot of 'em. You have to have linemen, 'cause they're part of the game. I thought, "Hell, that'll take a couple years." So they didn't get back to me for a couple years after that. [*Laughs*]

I was taking a train at the time, and we would go on a train and draw up plays the way the game was played. And then it finally came out on Apple, and as hardware started to come around and changed, we changed. We were always ahead of everyone, 'cause we were the first ones there. I mean, we were doing it before there was a "there."

OPM Could you have imagined back then that it would get to the level that it's at today?

JM No! Hell no! Because there was no level. Anyone who said they could imagine this back then is lyin'. You didn't know what it was. Computers were just kinda coming in at that time. So I thought computers were going to grow and there would be a day when most people would have one, and then one of the things they'd be able to do is play a game of computer football. Now that's as far as I took it.

OPM Do you ever ask yourself what more Tiburon can do?

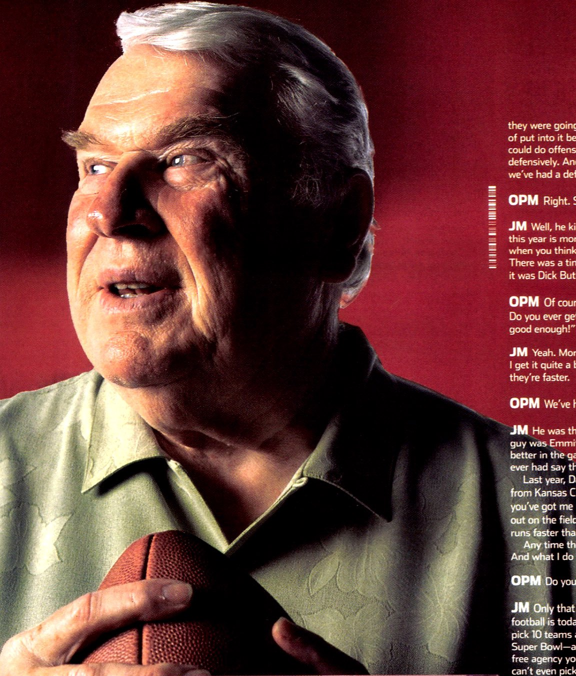
JM Yeah, but I always used to say as a coach that you never stay the same. If you think everything's OK and we're gonna stay the same, you're gonna slip. You know, you always have to get better. And I firmly believe that. I firmly believe that whatever it is, we have to get better. Graphics have to get better, realism has to get better, speed has to get better, positioning, plays.... Everything always has to get better. You can't stay the same.

OPM Do you actually play the game yourself?

JM Yeah, but not very well. The younger person can always play it better. What you do is you always watch someone else play. And that was one of the things: Watching someone else, there was a time when

MADDEN: THE CAREER

So what does Madden know about football? Just a little bit. A linebacker coach when he began his NFL coaching career with Oakland in 1967, Madden became the youngest head coach in the American Football League in 1969 at age 33. After retiring in 1979, he started his football-broadcasting career at CBS in 1980, moving to Fox after that network bought the NFL broadcasting rights in 1994. In 2002, he joined the Monday Night Football broadcast.



they were going for it on fourth down all the time. Everything we kind of put into it before was offense—there were just more things you could do offensively. And this year we have more things you can do defensively. And now we have Ray Lewis on the cover—the first time we've had a defensive player.

OPM Right. So what do you think of Ray Lewis as a player?

JM Well, he kind of epitomizes defense. I think that one of our things this year is more defense, better defense. And who do you think of when you think of defense in the NFL today? You think of Ray Lewis. There was a time when it was Lawrence Taylor. There was a time when it was Dick Butkus. But right now it's Ray Lewis. He's the perfect guy.

OPM Of course, all players have their own skill ratings in the game. Do you ever get any flak from players saying, "Hey, my rating's not good enough!"?

JM Yeah. More speed—"juice," as they call it. They all think—and I get it quite a bit—that they're not fast enough. That in real life they're faster.

OPM We've heard Emmitt Smith said you made him *too* fast....

JM He was the only guy. In the history of guys talkin' to me, the only guy was Emmitt Smith. He told me, "You know, I'm not that good. I'm better in the game than I am on the field!" And he's the *only* guy that I ever had say that.

Last year, Dante Hall got up—you know, the kick returner/receiver from Kansas City. He talked to me in training camp, and he said, "Man, you've got me so slow, *linemen* run faster than me, the trainer coming out on the field for an injured player runs faster than me, the doctor runs faster than me...." [*Laughs*]

Any time that I do get that, I take it seriously—I don't laugh at 'em. And what I do is I call up, and I say, "Make sure...."

OPM Do you have any predictions this year for the NFL?

JM Only that something wacky'll happen. I mean, that's the way football is today with free agency. There was a day when you could pick 10 teams and say two of these teams are going to make it to the Super Bowl—and you'd be right 95 percent of the time. And now with free agency you can't even do that. I mean, forget the two teams—you can't even pick a group of 10.

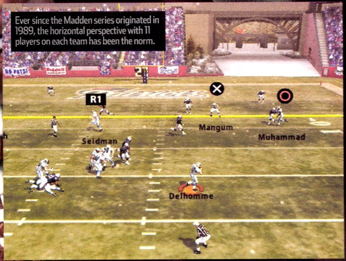
And if we were talking here a year ago, who was Carolina? They just got a new quarterback, Jake Delhomme. Who? They didn't even know how to say his name. Is it "Del-oom"? "Del-oop"? "De-bacca"? S---, the next thing you know, he's in the Super Bowl. And who would have picked Baltimore? Who would have picked Tampa? Who would have picked the Patriots? Who would have picked any of these teams?

OPM So does that make it any more exciting to you? The fact that you can't predict what's going to happen?

JM Yeah, and I had to have a meeting with myself on that because it's easy to say I like the old days. I like the dominant team; I like the great team—the Dallas Cowboys and the 49ers and the Joe Gibbs Washington Redskins and the undefeated Miami Dolphins. But those days are over, and they're not comin' back. So if all you are is a guy banging his head against the wall who keeps saying that.... You have to join it—you have to enjoy it.

The thing I really like about it is you don't know, and anyone can win. I think it helps the fans, too. It used to be you had the dominant team. If you were up, you were gonna be up for a long time, which was the good news. But if you were down, you were going to be down for a long time. And now, you don't have to stay down for a long time, so everyone that is down that won four or five games can say, "S---, look at Carolina. They just won four or five games and they're in the Super Bowl." So you have that, which is big. Everyone really believes that their team can get there.

Check out John Madden's complete OPM interview, coming this August to 1UP.com.



Ever since the Madden series originated in 1989, the horizontal perspective with 11 players on each team has been the norm.

"MY THING IS, IF I'M GONNA DO IT, IT HAS TO BE NFL FOOTBALL. I'M NOT INTERESTED IN OTHER TYPES OF FOOTBALL."

Photo by Michael Sexton

FRANCHISE MODE ENHANCEMENTS

***Madden 99* created franchise**—a gameplay mode since adopted by almost every other sports game. Every year, it only gets deeper, and *Madden 2005* is no different. Its most notable new features include...

NEWSPAPER STORIES

News-Chronicle
Packers slip by 'Hawks

Much similar to the way *NCAA Football*'s *Sports Illustrated* covers keep you informed about the happenings in your college football seasons, *Madden 2005*'s Storyline Central section debuts the use of newspapers to cover everything. And not just on a national scale—though you can check *USA Today* for the biggest stories in the league, the local newspaper (many of them actual licensed papers like *The Green Bay News-Chronicle*) also tells you what's up with your team in particular.

"It's a real nice, deep feature," comments Strauser. "There's literally 25,000 types of stories that are gonna pop up—anything from a guy got hurt on the field and he wants to play through the pain to, you know, this one player isn't getting the ball enough. Milestones will pop up, too, like Emmitt Smith breaking the rushing record—we'll track that. All sorts of really cool things like that."

TALK SHOWS WITH TONY BRUNO

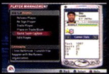
"We've always wanted to do a radio show," says Chiang, "and this year was the time to really come after it." The perfect host? None other than Fox Sports Radio voice Tony Bruno.

"It's all set up very interactively so that what he's talking about is what's going on in your franchise," explains Associate Producer Oge Young. "Of our thousands of potential newspaper stories, about the 500 most significant ones have been set up as radio-show talk. Tony Bruno will discuss significant player movement, teams that are off to a great start, and things like that. We try to set it up like a real radio show where we've got call-ins. If a team, say, cuts a player, people will call in and [voice whether they] like it or dislike it."

Also calling in are 25 of the 32 NFL head coaches, whom Bruno interviews just as he would on his actual show. Young says, "It's set up to be extensible enough so that in 2015, if Bill Belichick is coaching the Raiders—and it's the middle of the season and the Raiders are doing terribly—you'll still get an interview that tackles both of [these things].

"A lot of Tony's personality comes through," continues Young. "We've got his general takes on things like overtime rules or what the salary cap means to the NFL—that sort of thing."

PLAYER MORALE



No one wants an unhappy player—but you'll get 'em in *Madden 2005*. "The NFL is driven by stories seven days a week," says Strauser. "It's not just the game on Sunday that matters anymore. It's are your players happy and content? Are they getting enough playing time? Are you getting them the ball enough when they do play? Are they threatened by the rookie that you drafted?"

All of those factors can influence a player's performance on the field. "Each player has a morale ranking now—a morale progression system throughout the course of the season," he goes on. "If you don't keep him content, then stories will pop up internally first [via e-mail on your PDA], then get leaked out and become public stories [in newspapers and on Bruno's show]. You have to manage those expectations and stories, because it'll affect their in-game performance."

Ultimately, an upset player might demand a trade. It's best to keep him happy. Unless you really hate him, anyway.

OFF-SEASON MANEUVERING

Your managerial duties aren't over between February and August. New off-season features include restricted free agents, franchise tags (i.e., a designated player on your team who cannot become a free agent), and the fact that players looking to re-sign with your team must consider between 20 to 30 factors (team prestige, your offer, the town's weather, other talent on the team, etc.).

the big MOUTH

Tony Bruno is more than the host of Fox Sports Radio's nationally syndicated *The Morning Extravaganza*. He's been digitally immortalized as the host of the in-game sports-talk radio show in *Madden 2005*. —*David Simutis*

OPM Why did they ask you to be the radio voice of the game?

TONY BRUNO I was told they were looking for a radio voice and they wanted somebody national, and my name was mentioned. I've been a *Madden* fan for years. I've known the EA people—I go to all the parties and I love videogames. John Madden is a friend. I've known him since 1980. I worked with him in 1980 on his first radio job. I don't think John had anything to do with it. I'm sure the people at EA asked him about it, and I'm sure he had no problem with it. It's an honor. It's not just being in a videogame, it's like being in the best. They didn't invite me to do voices for *Grand Theft Auto*. [*Laughs*]

"I WOULD HAVE DONE THIS FOR NOTHING. SHOULD I SAY THAT?"

OPM You could make a whole career out of voicing games and not have to get up so early.

TB I love my job. I do the radio thing and I don't pursue a lot of stuff. When I announced it on my show, the response was amazing, and nobody even knew specifically what I was doing. It's a big deal. I'm pretty well known, but there are a lot of people who will be hearing me for the first time in the game, so it's going to help me as far as recognition. It's not glamorous—it's a lot of hard, tedious work—but the way the EA people put it together is amazing. I can't wait to see and hear it. The most exciting part is the end result. You put the game on and you say, "That's pretty cool, man...and that's *me*, kids."

OPM How has being this involved in the process changed your appreciation for *Madden*?

TB It's better: I'm in the game! How could I not appreciate it more? I appreciate it from the beginning because it's a great game. I hope it's better with me in it. I can't imagine people saying, "Oh my, what are they doing to that game? They're making it worse." They make it better every year. And if you give the fans more and something more to look forward to, and this is something they like, then it's even better. The part that's way beyond my comprehension is how this stuff actually works and how the technology makes this sound and look great. Those are the geniuses. What I'm doing is what I do every day. The geniuses are the ones who put it together and make it work. It's mind-boggling.

OPM Did you write the in-game rants?

TB No, but I basically did because the rants that are written are me. There's nothing that I say in the game that are words put into my mouth. This is exactly the way I feel, the way I talk, and the way I think. I had the creative freedom to change anything I wanted; if I read a rant that I didn't agree with, I told them I wanted to change it. I'm absolutely astounded at how the writers at EA were able to capture my feelings, my words, and my thoughts and put it all on paper.

OPM Do you have a personal favorite rant?

TB I don't remember. [*Laughs*] The thing that's so weird is we've done so much recording, and I'm doing my radio show every day, so I'm ranting every day anyway. I don't remember from recording 20 hours of script [some] time ago if the rant I was doing was for the game or if I did it on my show. Because it's me and I'm ranting about the NFL all the time and they're all exactly the same way I think. I'm doing my same thing in *Madden* that I do on my radio show every day.

OVERHEARD

"As a fan, and not a player, you all probably don't realize how realistic *Madden* is. We can actually practice reads, defenses, and offensive plays just by playing the game."
—Dolphins superstar running back Ricky Williams on his official website, www.run-ricky-run.com

MADDEN PSAT

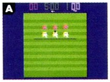
(PLAYSTATION APTITUDE TEST)

Think you know everything there is about *Madden*? Test your knowledge here, smarty-pants (or just look at it as a history lesson). Fifteen questions to celebrate 15 years.

1. Aboard what type of vehicle did John Madden first discuss creating a football game with EA, way back in 1986?
A. Plane
B. Train
C. Automobile
D. Roller Coaster

2. When was *John Madden Football*, EA's first *Madden* game, released for Apple II?
A. 1987
B. 1988
C. 1989
D. 1990

3. Which of these is a screenshot from the first *John Madden Football*?

A


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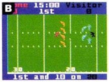

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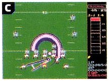

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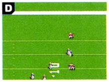


BONUS: Name the other three games.

4. Which of these does not exist?
A. *John Madden Football II* (PC)
B. *John Madden Football 92* (Genesis)
C. *John Madden Duo CD Football* (Turbo Duo)
D. *Madden NFL 96* (PS1)

5. Which of these does not apply to *John Madden Football: Championship Edition*?
A. Available on both major 16-bit systems
B. Available exclusively in rental stores
C. Released in 1992
D. Features 38 classic teams, but has no NFL or NFL Player's Association license

6. Fellow *Madden* commentator Al Michaels has taken part in other videogame franchises. Which of these apply? (Multiple answers...possibly.)
A. *ABC Monday Night Football*
B. *Bottom of the 9th*
C. *Hardball*
D. *Joe Montana Football*

7. True or False: *Madden* is the first American console sports title with a year in the title.

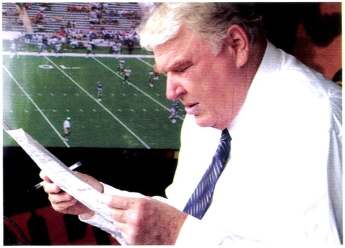
8. The first *Madden* with an NFL license came out in...
A. 1989
B. 1992
C. 1993
D. 1994

9. Which Sega Genesis game used the *Madden* engine to create a bloody version of football in which you could literally kill opposing players? (And incidentally, EA, you'd be wise to resurrect it.)
A. *Jerry Glanville's Pigskin Footbrawl*
B. *Mutant League Football*
C. *John Madden Bloodball*
D. *Barney's Hide & Seek Game*
BONUS: Who was the cover athlete for the answer to No. 9?

10. Which of these developers has never been associated with *Madden*?
A. Avalanche Software
B. High Score Productions
C. Tiburon
D. Visual Concepts

11. Which was the first PlayStation *Madden* to use 3D polygonal player models?
A. *Madden NFL 98*
B. *Madden NFL 99*
C. *Madden NFL 2000*
D. *Madden NFL 2001*

12. Franchise mode debuted in which *Madden*?
A. *Madden NFL 95*
B. *Madden NFL 97*
C. *Madden NFL 99*
D. *Madden NFL 2001*



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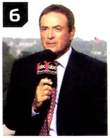

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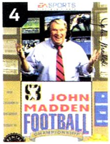

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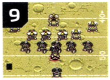
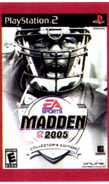


13. Who was the first NFL player on the cover of a *Madden*?
A. Warren Moon
B. Jerry Rice
C. Junior Seau
D. Eddie George

14. The EA Trax program started off in which *Madden*?
A. *Madden NFL 2001*
B. *Madden NFL 2002*
C. *Madden NFL 2003*
D. *Madden NFL 2004*

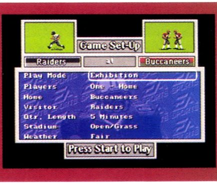
15. By the end of this year, how many PS1 *Maddens* will there be?
A. Seven
B. Eight
C. Nine
D. 10

Answers:
1. B, 2. C, 3. D (BONUS: A is Atari Football, B is Intellivision NFL Football, C is arcade 10-Yard Fight), 4. D, 5. A, 6. A and C (in the aptly titled Al Michaels Announces Hardball III), 7. True (John Madden Football 92), 8. C, 9. B (BONUS: Bones Jackson), 10. A (you thought it was D, didn't you?), 11. B, 12. C, 13. D, 14. C, 15. C.



MADDEN NFL 2005 COLLECTOR'S EDITION

In case you missed out on the old console days of *Madden*—or perhaps you just want to relive them—EA has the perfect solution. The limited-edition *Madden NFL 2005 Collector's Edition* includes the new game plus modernized versions of 16-bit and PS1 gameplay (two forms for the latter: sprite-based, as in *Madden 97*, and polygonal, as in *99* to present) and much more for *Madden* enthusiasts. Like *NCAA Football*'s College Classics, Madden Moments throws 15 of the past decade-and-a-half's most memorable situations at you, and you can play as any playoff team throughout that period of time. More than 1,000 trivia questions also await you, as do behind-the-scenes documentaries and other cool stuff. If you're willing to pay an extra 10 bucks for all these extras, the *CE* might be the way to go.



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Play Mode     Exhibition
Players       One - Home
Home          Buccaneers
Visitor       Raiders
Qtr. Length   5 Minutes
Stadium       Open/Grass
Weather       Fair
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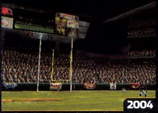
ENHANCING THE LOOK

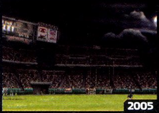
If defense is the primary focus for *Madden 2005*'s development, its aesthetic enhancements definitely fall close behind. "I really think this is going to be the best-looking *Madden* ever—didn't think I'd be saying that on the fifth version of the current hardware," admits Strauser.

Senior Art Director Mark Mongie leads the team in charge of the graphical overhaul. "It was very tough," he tells us. "We had one year to pull off a lot of changes. *Madden* is built on a legacy of sequential years of development, so there's a lot tied into a lot of other stuff. Making big changes to any project like this is a big challenge. We made quite a few changes with the system we had, and we brought some new improvements in as well." The most notable include...

ENVIRONMENTS

"We spent a lot of time on the environments," says Mongie. "There was a lot of research. I think we are accurate to the real-life environments. Plus, we added what I think is drama to the environments—more of a cinematic or Hollywood feel. That's probably my favorite area."

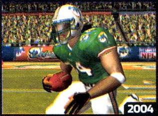


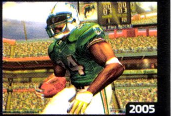


Some of this "drama" includes changing skies and weather. "We have this weather and time system in the game so that the weather, the sun, and skies and all that change throughout the course of the game," explains Strauser. "So you can start a game at 4:00, and soon the lights come on, and then by the end, it's dark with the moon in the sky. The guys are really pushing the hardware to the limits, and I'm really proud to see that in year five of the hardware, we're still doing that."

PLAYER MODELS

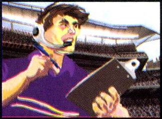
Just look at the muscular arms on Ricky Williams here compared with those in *Madden 2004*, and you can see how much effort the team put into re-creating its player models. Beyond just looking at players' pictures, Tiburon's artists hit the books and studied the human body in order to be as accurate as possible. You can even see the veins!

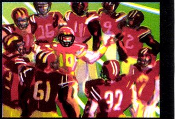




CUT-SCENES AND IN-GAME ANIMATIONS

Madden 2005 includes more than 1,000 new motion-captured animations—everything from rabid fans cheering on their home team to subtle tackle animations you probably won't even notice. In the conceptual stages, the cut-scenes begin with really cool art, like these pieces by Associate Art Director Tony Santo, a former Disney animator.





THE CURSE

SIGNING ON AS A MADDEN COVER ATHLETE DOESN'T COME WITHOUT ITS RISKS

WHICH PLAYER HAS BEEN THE MOST TRAGIC VICTIM OF THE MADDEN CURSE?

53%
MICHAEL VICK ('04)
Preseason injuries are just wrong.

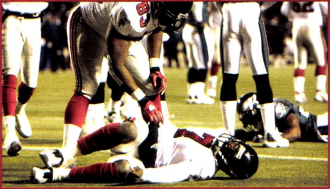
36%
PLEASE—THERE'S NO MADDEN CURSE
(Though maybe *Sports Illustrated* should do a cover story on it.)

7%
EDDIE GEORGE ('01)
The Titans should've been a lock that year.

2%
DAUNTE CULPEPPER ('02)
The Vikings paid the price for that one.

1%
MARSHALL FAULK ('03)
He bounced back, but the Rams suffered.

Source: USAToday.com



Few doubt that *Madden 2005* will do great things this year—but can the same be said for Ray Lewis? True, he is arguably—almost *inarguably*—the greatest defensive player in the game today. But then again, he's also *Madden*'s cover athlete. Ever since players replaced John Madden's smiling mug on box covers—that'd be in *Madden 2001*, the first PS2 edition—only bad things have followed in the season to come for anyone adorning the game's cover. It's a phenomenon referred to by many as the Madden Curse.

"Yeah...that happens to good players," Madden says. "I mean, I don't believe in those things—whether it's the Madden Curse or *Sports Illustrated*'s—but you can make a case. I mean, Mike Vick did get hurt...."

Indeed he did as *Madden 2004*'s cover boy last year. Just as in 2002, when Marshall Faulk's worst season since 1996 (mis)led the Rams to their first playoff-free year since 1998. And just as QB Daunte Culpepper missed four games in 2001 due to injury—his Vikings finished 5-11 that year. Titan Eddie George started the curse in *Madden 2001* (released late into the 2000 season), unable to avoid both the embarrassment of a first-round home playoff loss to the Ravens and a disastrous 2001 season to follow.

So what's Lewis have to say about all this nonsense? "I think it just happens," he comments. "You run into situations in life, whatever they may be. But you don't put it on the cover of a game and say that's why you got hurt! Nahhhhhh. I don't believe in curses either way. What God has for you, man can't curse—and I truly believe that."

Good luck, Ray....

MADDEN AT THE MOVIES

The 2003 movie *Runaway Jury* stars John Cusack as Nicholas Easter, an everyday Joe just trying to get out of jury duty. His excuse doesn't impress the judge...but we think it's a fine one.

Judge Mr. Easter, that's the second time you've looked at your watch. Are we keeping you from something?

Nicholas No, your honor. I wouldn't presume to waste your time. I just—I think if you knew my situation, you might be inclined to excuse me.

Judge Your situation, Mr. Easter?

Nicholas Yes, your honor.... It's the, uh, Madden Challenge.

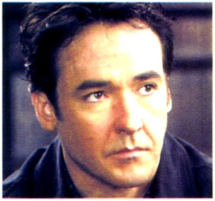
Judge The Madden what?

Nicholas You know *Madden* football? The videogame? Well, you'd be surprised at how many people play. At any rate, every year, they pick the best 15 players from across the country to compete in a kind of tournament, you know, between NFL players and celebrities—

Judge I'm not following you.

Nicholas It's like this, your honor: The prize is $100,000. [It's actually $50,000 –*Ed.*] So I just don't know if I can afford the opportunity to pass up that kind of cash. It's a big deal—

Judge I think it's time you had a lesson in civic responsibility. Do you have any objection to that, Mr. Easter?



Nicholas Well, it's something I've been doing for a very long time—

Judge [*Angrily*] The *jury* system was originated, Mr. Easter, because a thousand years before that, an individual judge had the power to hang, *for example*, any young man he simply did not like!

Nicholas [*Humbled*] Yes, your honor.

the cover BOY

If you know anything about pro football, you're familiar with the defensive talents of *Madden 2005*'s cover athlete Ray Lewis. We chatted with him over the phone as he played the game with a Tiburon rep. And before you write us about it, our answer is "no"—we don't get the Mother's Day comment, either.

OPM Why did EA choose *you* to be the first defensive player on the cover of *Madden*?

RAY LEWIS Outside of being the most dominant player in the game? I don't know. [*Laughs*]

OPM That pretty much sums it up right there.

RL Me and EA hooked up a couple of years ago, and we have a great relationship. It's uplifting knowing the things we're putting together.

OPM So, have you gotten to play the game yet?

RL Oh, yeah—I'm playing it right now. I'm actually beating the man who created it. [*Laughs*]

OPM Nice! What's your favorite new feature about the game?

RL Oh, definitely the defense. This new hit stick that we have is *incredible*. It's real! You know, with the hit stick, you can make a bit hit, and it'll change the whole momentum of the game. And that's what football is all about, even in real life. You don't see football games going to 100 points and all this stuff, you know. And those are the things when I even came into it that I just asked—I said, "Hey, make it a little more limiting, at least," you know?

OPM So when do you think you've ever used the real-life hit stick?

RL Aw, man, I use the hit stick probably every time I step on the field! [*Laughs*]

OPM Is there one particular blow you're especially proud of?

RL Oh, yeah. I hit this guy [Keith Burns] from the Broncos on *Monday Night Football* on that Chris McAlister kick return. I don't think he likes me to this day because of that hit. But that's one of them hits, man, that changed the total momentum of the game.

OPM What else do you think makes *Madden* better than all the other football games out there?

RL Well, outside of the game itself being the No. 1 sport in football...shoot, man. Everybody loves it. It's just life. It's us.

OPM We've heard you make people do push-ups when they lose....

RL Yeah, I don't gamble or anything like that, so that's our thing—our thing is workouts.

OPM What's the most push-ups you've ever made somebody do?

RL Oh...probably a thousand.

OPM Really?!? Who was that? How bad did you beat him?

RL [Ravens wide receiver] Travis Taylor. I don't know—he just ran into a buzz saw over at my house one day.

OPM Sweet. Have you ever had a problem with the way *Madden* has portrayed you as a player in the game?

RL Mm...no. You know what, *Madden* has done a great job with me.

OPM Yeah, you're always a great Raven to choose. Where do you get that fire to play so well in real life?

RL Oh, that's easy. Outside of every Sunday being Mother's Day, just the football game itself—the game of football—is what I was built to do. It just happened. God gave me a direction to nurture it as well. And so I nurtured it, and it turned into my passion in terms of everything that I believe in.

OPM What's it gonna take for the Ravens to be in the Super Bowl?

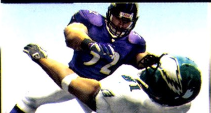
RL To step on the field. It's our time again.

OPM Terrell Owens dodged playing for *your* team. Are you upset?

RL Oh, not at all. You have to understand, there are some people you can trust and some people you can't. If you're a man of your word, then you're a man of your word. And if you're not, you're not. And of course, that just showed that he's not. He says one thing, creates all this controversy, and does another. So just understand it that way. Whatever reason he had, hopefully it works out for him.

OPM The Eagles are on your schedule for Halloween. If T.O. comes up the middle, is it trick-or-treat time or what?

RL I'm gonna put on a Terrell Owens costume at the game. [*Laughs*] Yeah, I'm gonna come dressed as him. And I'm *gonna* find him....



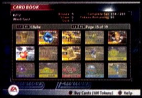
25 1/2 REASONS WE LOVE MADDEN

1. You can change things up in owner's mode by promoting "Dollar Rib Sandwich Night!" at the TWA Dome in St. Louis.
2. Rich Gannon's sidearm delivery.
3. You roll out of the pocket with your QB and see your tight end covered by a linebacker. Finally, the defender charges, and you float the ball over his head to the wide-open TE. First down.
4. Playmaker control. ›
5. Playing someone you know and exposing every single flaw, character or otherwise.
6. Busting a 78-yard TD run after being held to 19 yards on 15 carries (Barry Sanders, anyone?).
7. Busting your hump with your interior defenders for three quarters and finally earning a sack with your DT on a game-saving third and long.
8. Winning a game by running up 160 yards and two TDs with Michael Vick, while passing for only 60 yards.
9. Your opponent dives for the pylon to tie the game, but you force a fumble *at the goal line*. Ball rolls out of the end zone. Touchback. Your ball at the 20.
10. Joining in on the Tai Streets bidding war to drive up the price on the third-string receiver, just to screw up another team's salary cap.
11. Zipping a frozen rope through that last golden ring in the QB Precision Passing minicamp.
12. The words "user pick."
13. Because one time—and one time ›only—you felt justified in using a Madden Card to attempt a last-second, game-tying desperation field goal from *94 yards away*. And without guilt, you celebrated like mad when you banged it in off the upright to send the game into OT.
14. Biting your fingernails to sawdust because your favorite player is on the cover of the game and you're just waiting for the Madden Curse to end his season prematurely. Or he might just start to suck.
15. The defensive strafe button.
16. Thinking the soon-to-be-released version of *Madden* won't be capable of toppling the previous year, only to find out it makes the previous year feel more outdated than the Broncos' blinding orange jerseys from the Elway-did-it-himself era.
17. Your 15th overall draft pick, a strong safety out of Texas Southern, winning the Defensive Rookie of the Year award.
18. Even though you went an unexplainable 1-15 (without simming one game) in your franchise season, you're all smiles: You just won the first pick overall in next season's draft!

18 1/2. Trading up to get that first pick after going 3-13 and missing out on the top spot.

19. As cheesy, as canned, as predetermined as it is—when you pop someone's top and his helmet goes skyward, it rules!
20. The crowd peaking when your running back cuts into the open field.
21. Using C-Port's breakneck speed in the Ground Attack minigame on a cutback that leaves three defenders in the dust.
22. The fact that Old Man Wide Receiver Jerry Rice looks just like Old Man Wide Receiver Jerry Rice. ›
23. Moving Miami's beloved Dolphins out of Florida and into the tropical paradise of Toronto.
24. Forcing a wobbly duck by cracking the QB's backside right as he releases the ball.
25. Playing online versus your favorite gaming pal who moved to the other side of the world.

—Todd Zuniga



TIBURON GETS COACHED

MADDEN'S DEVELOPER CALLS ON OUTSIDE HELP

While Tiburon is not without its former football players (Larry Richart, the backup quarterback on the Florida Gators' 1996 national championship team, works on playbooks), most of its developers are just really big fans who live and breathe the sport. Head coaches contribute their knowledge from time to time, but their busy schedules limit their ability to do so. However, quite a few assistant coaches willingly assist Tiburon in any way they can. One of the most active this year was Tennessee Titans Defensive Coordinator Jim Schwartz.

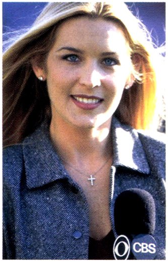
"It was a relaxed time talking about football, which is something I do 365 days a year anyway," explains Schwartz. "I love what I do, love everything about the game, and never remember a day that I didn't like going into the office. I like the *Madden* guys because I felt the same vibe from them. These are all guys who love what they do. They have a lot of pride in their work."

Schwartz tells us that he spent a full day with the team and followed up with a few phone calls. "They wanted to make sure the actual football plays were as legit as possible," he says. "They were very concerned about the authenticity of the game. I have to admit that I was surprised [that nothing I saw was very off base] because I am very critical of anything that has to do with NFL football: videogames, movies, books. I don't know if the typical *Madden* player will notice, but they have made the game so authentic that even our own football players comment about certain plays that they recognize from both our and our opponents' playbooks."

OTHER STUFF

Every *Madden* has its focuses—in this case, defense, presentation, and Storyline Central. And every *Madden* also has its subtle new additions. Like these....

- Tons of new plays—everything from team-specific new playbook entries to trick plays like the flea flicker.
- Take a seat, Melissa Stark. It's fellow sideline-reporting hottie Jill Arrington's time to chip in with relatively worthless comments. ›
- How many times have you screwed up a potentially huge running play, only to watch the replay and think, "Man, if only I had remembered to hurdle...."? For the first time in a PlayStation *Madden*, the Triangle button is not used for hurdling when you have the ball. Rather, you use it to protect the ball, usually in short-yardage situations when you don't want to fumble. Hurdling is automatic now.
- For the first time in *Madden*, receivers leap into the air to catch passes.
- Online enhancements include matchmaking, a game meant for short online sessions called Rushing Attack, tournaments (complete with news updates), and stronger anticheating measures.
- Players don't simply stop at the goal line once they score a touchdown anymore. Now, expect to see in-game celebration animations, from general spikes to personalized ones like the Giants' Jeremy Shockey punting the ball into the crowd.



EXCLUSIVE REVIEW

MADDEN NFL 2005

OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE
GAME OF THE MONTH

IS SIMPLY BEING BETTER THAN THE LAST ONE GOOD ENOUGH?

Wanna know the best way to figure out the importance of a new feature in a sports game? Just go back and play an earlier version. If you don't miss that given feature in the older game, then it's just a nice touch—good to have, probably, but by no means essential. If you do miss it, though...well, then you know it's time to upgrade.

In *Madden NFL 2004*, Playmaker control substantially upped your ability to play with controlled spontaneity, making any *Madden* before it a noticeably different play experience. So does *Madden NFL 2005* feature anything so significant that it changes the way you play the game? Well...not really.

If anything qualifies, it's the hit stick. **Delivering a crushing blow is a great use for the right analog stick**, and you'll use it a lot. Actually, you might use it *too* much—it soon became my all-purpose tackle button. Truth be told, though, I've hit equally as hard with a dive tackle...which is actually riskier to use. Still, when you return a fumble on a kickoff play for a TD because of the hit stick, it feels pretty freakin' good.

That said, I did that twice in my first seven games. Should that happen? And on the other side, *you* can get belted hard, as well—in those same seven games, the too-hard process of calling a fair catch caused Derrick Mason to fumble five times, resulting in five TDs. One I can buy. Two? Maybe. But *five?!*

Madden 2005's upgraded look definitely improves its visual splendor, and it's about time the weather started changing throughout a game. But ultimately, it's all just a really nice touch—you only really even notice the enhancements in replays and cut-scenes, not while you actually play.

The new Storyline Central in franchise mode adds the welcome, if not entirely necessary, Tony Bruno radio show. I'm incredibly impressed by how much work went into all this, and—except for some callers who sound like amateur voice actors reading lines and the fact that every player is (understandably) referred to as "this guy"—it really does have the feel of a radio show. It's nice background for all your player adjustments and whatnot.

Speaking of which, **I could do without all the inner turmoil caused by unhappy players.** Unlike the similar mechanic used in *MVP Baseball 2004* (a much more individual-focused game by nature), you pretty much have to change your own style of play as a gamer to satisfy certain guys who may think they're not getting the ball enough. And that just isn't very fun.

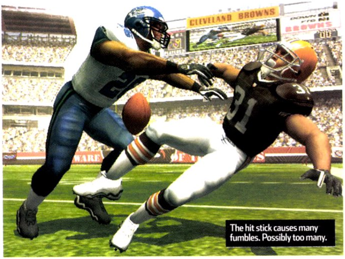
But that's not to say *Madden* isn't as fun as ever. It's still great, great football, and all the new stuff makes it the best one yet. I'm just not so sure it's worth 50 bucks if you already have last year's edition. « *Chris Baker*

PlayStation RATING

TDs Very welcome new features (hit stick, Storyline Central, and better graphics), arguably the best football game ever made
FUMBLES Nothing is so innovative that it revolutionizes gameplay

Pub. EA Sports **Dev.** EA Tiburon **ESRB** Everyone **MSRP** $49.99

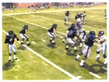
[●●●●◐]

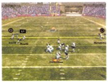


The hit stick causes many fumbles. Possibly too many.

BETTER DEFENSE?

EA has emphasized heavily how much better defense is this time around. Yes, it is better—but only in the sense that you can now use the hit stick and that you have the ability to call defensive hot routes (something maybe 5 percent of us will learn to do effectively). I can't say that either really affected my actual performance on defense much, though—*Madden* remains mostly about offense. But then again, isn't that what most people want?





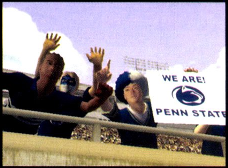
THE SIMMED SEASON SAYS....

According to our completely simmed season of *Madden 2005*, the Carolina Panthers rebound from last year's disappointing Super Bowl loss with a win in the big game against the Kansas City Chiefs. Final score: 34-20.

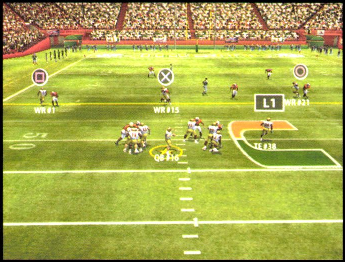
PANTHERS
PITTSBURGH
15

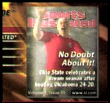
NCAA FOOTBALL 2005

GREAT AS USUAL...BUT WHERE'S THE WOW?



FREAKY FANS
NCAA includes tons of celebratory fan cut-scenes like this one. It's funny to see Gator diehards do a mock tomahawk chop as they feast on Florida State, and you'll often see disappointed home fans decide to head home. (*Too* often, actually.)




Sports Illustrated
No Doubt About It!
Ohio State celebrates a dream season after beating Oklahoma 24-20.

THE SIMMED SEASON SAYS...
According to our simulated college football season using *NCAA Football 2005*, it's going to be a great year for Ohio State. The undefeated Buckeyes will hand the Oklahoma Sooners their third loss of the year by completing a perfect season. A few other interesting notes for the year:

- Kansas State's HB #43 (don't dare call him Darren Sproles) wins the Heisman Trophy after rushing for 2,280 yards.
- North Texas shocks the world, going 11-1 and finishing No. 12 in the nation.
- LSU follows its championship season by finishing unranked at 7-5.

***NCAA Football 2005* is awesome.** I knew that going in. You probably knew it, too, before even reading this review. Once again, it tops what it did last year. Once again, it's easily the greatest college football game ever made. Once again, it's my new favorite videogame of all time.

But, **despite some really cool additions, *not* once again do I feel entirely wowed by it.** *Mostly* wowed, yes...but not *entirely*, as I always have been in the past.

And there's actually quite a bit included to add to the "wow" established in the last three PS2 games. Most apparent is what EA dubs the "match-up stick." Using the right analog stick, you can see how your players stack up against your opponent's. With so many teams in the college game—not to mention so many players of varying skill—you'll probably find yourself using this feature at least three or four times a game.

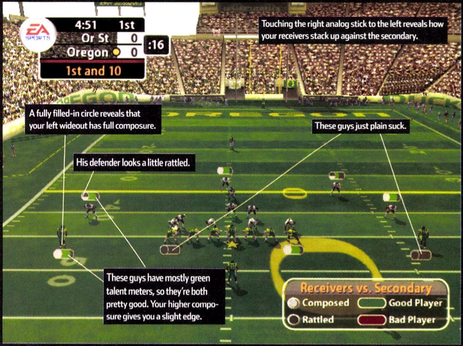
Beyond showing a player's ability, the match-up stick also displays his composure. Remember when, back in the day, *Super Tecmo Bowl* told you how a player was feeling—good, average, crappy—and his performance reflected that? It's that same basic idea—you kind of have to wonder why it took so long for a modern football game to institute it.

Home-field advantage plays a major role in affecting composure, and it does so in a big way. If you're a visiting team, a rowdy crowd can really get to your guys. In some of the noisier stadiums, you're best off not calling audibles because there's a very good chance your receivers will mishear you and run the wrong routes. You might even see the screen shake, a symbolic representation of the pressure your team is feeling (just turn it off if it bothers you). As the home team, you can help frenzy the crowd, both by kicking ass on the field and by hitting L2 at the line on defense. Just don't start sucking—fans can be fickle, you know.

You can also rattle a player's composure by hitting L2 at the right time to deliver a crushing blow. If this sounds anything like *Madden*'s "hit stick" to you, there's a good reason for that—they're essentially the same thing. (Apparently, "hit shoulder button" isn't catchy enough of a marketing term.) Much like seeing "user pick" or "user hit for loss" appear onscreen, **knowing you've walloped someone hard enough to get recognized for a "user big hit" is one of the true "hell yeah!" moments of gaming.**

Not so exciting—but equally welcome—are the new hot routes available. Now, you can call for slant routes or even change the direction of a running play without moving anyone around. The subtle nature of the latter move is particularly handy, especially when playing against someone.

And now that playing online involves organized tournaments, you might just find yourself challenging *lots* of people. I'm especially happy to see the option to play with "equal teams"—now you shouldn't hesitate to play as your beloved Tulane Green Tide against the punk kid in Maine who beats you only because he insists on picking USC or Oklahoma. Online could really use some



Touching the right analog stick to the left reveals how your receivers stack up against the secondary.

A fully filled-in circle reveals that your left wideout has full composure.

These guys just plain suck.

His defender looks a little rattled.

These guys have mostly green talent meters, so they're both pretty good. Your higher composure gives you a slight edge.

COLLEGE ATMOSPHERE SHINES IN *NCAA 2005.*

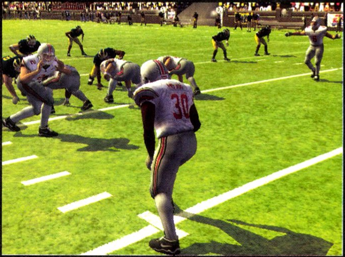
THE 25 LOUDEST STADIUMS

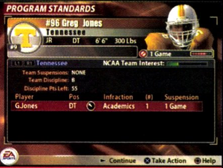
Home-field advantage is a big deal in *NCAA Football 2005.* Not satisfied with where your school sits on EA's pre-2004 ranking of loudest stadiums? You can change it by succeeding in dynasty mode and ensuring the presence of more and more diehards attending every Saturday in seasons to come.

FLORIDA GATORS
NCAA Football 2005
#10 Florida Gators

1. Ben Hill Griffin Stadium, Florida
2. Neyland Stadium, Tennessee
3. Ohio Stadium, Ohio State
4. Tiger Stadium, Louisiana State
5. Autzen Stadium, Oregon
6. Husky Stadium, Washington
7. Kyle Field, Texas A&M
8. Camp Randall Stadium, Wisconsin
9. Memorial Stadium, Nebraska
10. Sanford Stadium, Georgia
11. Kinnick Stadium, Iowa
12. Michigan Stadium, Michigan
13. Lane Stadium, Virginia Tech
14. Doak Campbell Stadium, Florida St.
15. Notre Dame Stadium, Notre Dame
16. Clemson Memorial Stadium, CU
17. Beaver Stadium, Penn State
18. Oklahoma Memorial Stadium, OU
19. Jordan-Hare Stadium, Auburn
20. Carrier Dome, Syracuse
21. Bryant-Denny Stadium, Alabama
22. KSU Stadium, Kansas State
23. Mountaineer Field, West Virginia
24. Martin Stadium, Washington State
25. Miami Stadium, Miami

ROWDY CROWDS
Any Wolverine knows that Michigan Stadium can get mighty loud when the rival Buckeyes are in town. Here, the quarterback tries desperately to change the play at the line. But it looks like the running back and receiver are having a hard time hearing him. There's an awfully good chance one of them might screw up. Much to the delight of 111,000 strong.





PROGRAM STANDARDS

#96 Greg Jones
Tennessee
JR DT 6'6" 300 Lbs
#9
1 Game

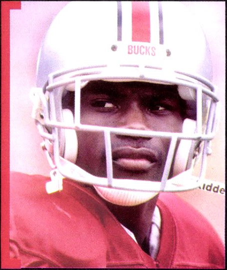
L1 R1 Tennessee NCAA Team Interest:

Team Suspensions: NONE
Team Discipline: B
Discipline Pts Left: 55

Player	Pos		Infraction	(#)	Suspension
G.Jones	DT		Academics	1	1 Game

Continue · Take Action · Help

BENCH HIM
One of *NCAA*'s cooler features (aside from again being able to name your players, as we did here) requires you to manage players who break rules. See that NCAA Team Interest meter? Better discipline anyone deserving punishment, or it'll grow, and your team will face tough sanctions.

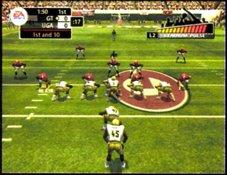


ALL THE GALLOWAY

About to begin his 10th year in the NFL (and his first year as a Tampa Bay Buccaneer), you'd think Joey Galloway would favor *Madden* as his football game of choice. The wide receiver is more of an *NCAA Football* man, though—and he's one of the best. If you remember peeking at last year's top players, you may have seen "GWay" among the elite. That's him.

"You have to play people," says Galloway, on what it takes to get to his level. "It is crazy when you get online because you have to play a different person each time, and then it takes at least a quarter to figure out a strategy and get a feel for what they are going to do. You have to figure out what they are doing as quickly as you can, and then you can be successful and unstoppable on offense—which I have been."

The Ohio State alumnus started playing football videogames with *Tecmo Bowl* on NES—and he doesn't shy away from discussing his superiority to a former Buckeye teammate/current *NCAA* announcer. "Me and Kirk Herbstreit have been going at it since college," Galloway tells us. "Each year, he goes down to help make the college football game with the idea in mind of stopping what I do. He goes down and says, 'OK, Galloway ran with the quarterback this whole year—we are going to put a stop to that.' He then comes back feeling pretty good about himself, walks into my house, and says he's got the stuff for this year. I kill him every year. You could call him up today, ask him who's the best college football online player, and he will say me."



HOME-FIELD ADVANTAGE
As the home team, you can actually control the vehemence of the crowd using L2. Tiburon recorded three crowds of varying sizes to better depict the different audio levels you'd hear between bigger and smaller stadiums.

full-fledged league action, though. Why can't EA step up with that?

For that, you have to engage in good ol' dynasty mode, which features the same degree of depth we know and love, along with some *super*subtle enhancements. My favorite: As part of your off-season preparations, you can change players' positions—something that happens quite a bit in real life. The setup is awkward, but it's a fine feeling once you've discovered a current outside linebacker who's ranked six points higher as a defensive end. It's also cool that you can draft general athletes whom you assign a position from scratch.

Throughout the season, you might have to bench your players for infractions like bad grades, missing curfew...or other more serious, carefully phrased infractions ("HB #34 got busted for using heroin" wouldn't make the NCAA very happy with EA, now would it?). Failing to do so draws attention to your program from the NCAA, which might eventually enforce sanctions as severe as the death penalty. Ouch.

The action during an actual game remains as sweet as ever—cool new running moves and tackling animations only help—but a few things need to be addressed. Like ball physics: I understand the desire to make the game fun with lots of tipped balls, but the physics of it all just looks ridiculous. And it's not uncommon to see the ball tipped up to four times in one play. Also, you'll find yourself avoiding draw plays because the onscreen icons meant to fool your opponent actually work *against* you when they cover up your runner. And Brad Nessler, please shut up about the crowd noise! If I hear you say, "I don't know if they'll be able to hear his cadence in the midst of all this mayhem," one more time....

Little issues like those don't bug me too much—they really do little to lessen the wow factor for *NCAA 2005*. So what does? It's hard to say, to be honest, but I think you need look no further than its pro-based big brother. *NCAA* has looked the same since 2001, and **its age is starting to show**—why can't, aside from nicer-looking skies, it get the full graphical upgrade? And why not add cool gameplay devices like Playmaker control? Why no mini-camps?

"That's *Madden*'s thing" is the line I get from anyone I ask at EA. Fair enough. It's definitely a way to make more people see differences between the two games so they won't just refer to *NCAA* as *Madden: The College Edition*. But I should hope that the gameplay and atmosphere—the option, the wishbone, the school spirit, the mascots—would be enough to accomplish that in themselves. « *Chris Baker*

OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE RATING

TDs Awesome gameplay, fantastic atmosphere, incredibly deep dynasty mode

FUMBLES Lots of little things (Nessler!), *Madden* proves that *NCAA* can be better

Pub. EA Sports **Dev.** EA Tiburon **ESRB** Everyone **MSRP** $49.99

[●●●●◐]

LARRY FITZGERALD

PROOF THAT GOOD THINGS DO STILL COME OUT OF PITT

LARRY: THE STATS

Birth date: August 31, 1983

Height: 6'2"

Weight: 223

40-yard dash: 4.42

Games played: 26

Receptions per game: 7.3

Total yards: 2,677

Consecutive games with a TD catch: 18

Total TDs: 34

Points received in Heisman Trophy vote: 1,353

Larry Fitzgerald rocks—anyone who saw him play for the Pittsburgh Panthers certainly knows so. It's no wonder the Arizona Cardinals used their first pick in the draft to snap up the talented wide receiver. He's also a natural choice for the cover of *NCAA Football 2005*.

OPM What was more important to you: Going early in the draft or going to one of your favorite teams?

LARRY FITZGERALD Neither's a priority for me, to be honest. I [knew I was] gonna get picked. I'm just looking to contribute.

OPM Home-field advantage is a big deal in *NCAA 2005*. What are some of the loudest stadiums you played in?

> **"NOT TO BE COCKY OR ANYTHING, BUT I'M PRETTY GOOD."**

LF Virginia Tech is pretty loud. West Virginia's pretty loud. Syracuse is real loud, too. They'd bring out these really noisy speakers to make it loud in practice [so we could prepare].

OPM Could you ever just not hear?

LF Well, as a receiver you usually use hand signals, so you know what the quarterback is saying. You know what the snap count is on.

OPM Was it difficult to leave school early?

LF No. It's tough to leave your teammates and the guys that you've grown to love and stuff, but everybody goes to college to earn a better living, and I was able to do that with only two years. I'm fortunate. Very fortunate.

OPM Did you play *NCAA Football* a lot with your teammates?

LF All the time. Definitely. That's all we did play, man. Missed many classes, man [*laughs*]. We played *Madden*, too. We played *NFL Street*. And I used to be a big hockey guy. [But now] I'm pretty much all NFL. Not to be cocky or anything, but I'm pretty good.

OPM Cool! Who's your toughest competition?

LF My roommate, Reggie Carter—he played cornerback for us. He's pretty good, but I'd beat him probably three out of five games we'd play.

OPM Do you think you'll play any of your old Pitt teammates online?

LF Oh, yeah, definitely. I really wanna get into online more. That's something I do wanna do in the future.

OPM Was there one game that you guys played more than any other?

LF I think *NCAA* and *Madden* are right there, head to head. Recently, I've been playing a lot more *Madden*, though [*laughs*].

OPM Makes sense! Of course in *NCAA*, there are no "real" players, but many are based on actual guys. Do any players get upset at how the game portrays them?

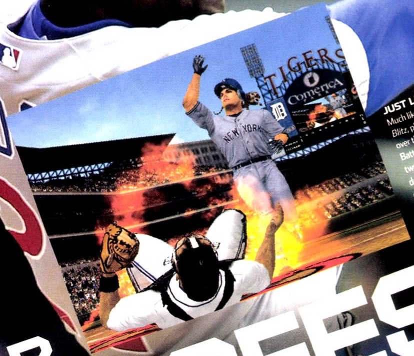
LF Oh yeah, you always get these guys who are frustrated about their speed and all that. But I thought it was always funny how those guys would be all angry and upset. The only one way to prove [the game wrong] is action—go out there and show 'em.

OPM Were you always happy with "you"?

LF Yeah. I wasn't on there the first year, but the second year I was extremely happy.

MLB SLUGFEST LOADED

TIME TO MAKE A VISIT TO THE MOUND



JUST LIKE JAM Much like *NBA Jam* and *NFL Blitz*, players can catch on fire over the course of the game. Batters get hot by getting two hits in a row; pitchers can do the same by getting three consecutive strikeouts. Generally, this makes players a little faster and stronger... but that's about it.

While EA, 989, and Sega try to beat the crap out of each other for baseball simulation supremacy, Midway quietly slips in with its own take on baseball. If you're at all familiar with previous versions of *MLB SlugFest*, then you already know that it's typically a much more lighthearted take on professional baseball, complete with crazy pitches, turbo baserunning, punching fielders and runners, hard slides, and oddball commentary.

And there's plenty more of that in *MLB SlugFest: Loaded*, at least if you're playing in the SlugFest mode. Pitching remains incredibly simple and straightforward—all you have to do is select from one of four pitches and basically choose if you'd rather throw a ball or a strike. Also, if you're so inclined, you can just bean the batter, which has always been useful in *SlugFest* since it can adversely affect a batter's individual statistics, such as speed and power. Batting is just as easy, since it has options for a power or contact swing and some basic batter maneuvering.

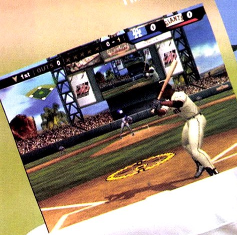
It's this simplicity that usually makes SlugFest a worthwhile alternative to baseball games that try to capture every single nuance of the sport. But this year, **Midway's made an effort to strengthen the simulation elements** rather than make any significant improvements to its arcade-gameplay gimmick.

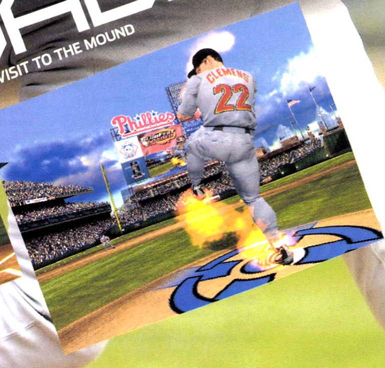
Take the franchise mode, which is almost as in-depth as any other baseball simulation thanks to incredibly deep stat tracking and the ability to make trades, sign free agents, or call up players from AAA. There's no question it's a great feature, but if you're that interested in the trials and tribulations of building and maintaining a successful franchise, there are better options available.

Likewise, using the MLB mode transforms *SlugFest* into a good simulation of baseball that gives you far more control over pitching and generally mimics the sport more accurately (as the option suggests, duh). But you can mix in some of the SlugFest mode options to make things a little more interesting.

And you should. If you're even remotely interested in *SlugFest* for its simulation mode...well, you shouldn't be—other games out there do it better. Additionally, if you own last year's game, there isn't much reason to upgrade to *Loaded*, simply because **it hasn't changed all that much** aside from the online play. But even the online portion of *SlugFest* is pretty standard, since it only offers basic stat tracking, rankings, and various types of updates, such as rosters.

Overall, *Loaded* isn't a bad game. In fact, it still has all of the stuff that makes it a nice diversion from the typical baseball title. But that stuff hasn't changed enough to warrant a purchase. « *Giancarlo Varanini*





OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE RATING

HITS Still has everything that made the last *SlugFest* fun, online play is a good addition
ERRORS Not enough changes, simulation aspects feel out of place

Pub. Midway **Dev.** Midway **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $39.99

[●●●◐○]

ATHENS 2004

HUGS AND KISSES

When I was a kid, I used to play my sister in *Summer Games* on our Apple IIe. In *Athens 2004*, I discovered that Olympics-type gameplay hasn't evolved one iota in the past 20 years.

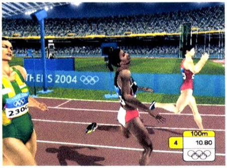
989 Sports' iteration of this year's Summer Olympics provides you with 25 events (although since the four swimming events and five nonhurdling track events are virtually identical to each other, there are effectively only 18). The game is quite pretty, and the variety of camera angles makes it look like you're watching a broadcast of the events. Try your hand at track and field, gymnastics, weight lifting, swimming, horse jumping, skeet shooting, or archery. Aside from the individual event competitions, you can also play one of several groupings of events, compete in an ultimate championship composed of all 25 events, or customize your own combination. You also have the option to play party mode, which allows you to use a dance pad instead of a gamepad.

Gameplay slightly varies up what it's been for every other Olympics game since the dawn of digital play: XOXOXOXOXOXO. Sometimes it's broken up by timed pressings of L1, and one time you get to alternate L1 and R1 at top speed instead of X and Circle—but variety ain't the name of the game. Particularly torturous are lengthier track events in which you push buttons at top speed for up to five minutes straight; "particularly" as it is humanly impossible to hit the buttons at anywhere near the speed necessary to beat the A.I.

Ultimately, I had fun playing against my husband for about an hour (except for the 800-meter and 1,500-meter track events), and then I was over it. I don't know about you, but for $40, I like more than an hour's worth of play. « *Dana Jongewaard*

GAMEPLAY TIP

To speed your ✕ and ○ alternating ability, try resting a AA battery across both buttons. You still won't beat the A.I. in the longer track events, but it might keep you from getting lapped.



PlayStation RATING

GOLD MEDAL Nice graphics, get a workout with your dance pad
DQ'D You'll be buying a new gamepad when you wear out your X and Circle buttons

Pub. 989 Sports **Dev.** Eurocom **ESRB** Everyone **MSRP** $39.99

[● ● ◐ ○ ○]

POOL PARADISE

NOT QUITE PARADISE, NOT QUITE A PARKING LOT

There are lots of things to like about *Pool Paradise*. It has a hilariously retro knockoff of *Defender*. It has skeeball. It has darts. It has a soothing tropical-island setting. It has wacky characters loosely based on actual people (O.J. Stumptsem, for example). It has a day/night cycle.

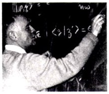
Trouble is, none of these things have anything *at all* to do with pool.

The basic pool game, to be sure, is entirely adequate. But there's so much other stuff going on that it sort of takes a backseat. Things like the creepy disembodied hands that represent your opponents—and which, I must point out, will haunt my nightmares for eternity—end up distracting you from the central game.

And that central game is actually pretty darn good. There are a crapload of different games, from 6-ball to "Bowliards." You can also set up games with wacky-shaped tables and even with different physics by using the air-hockey table or setting up a game on the moon. Yes, the moon.

The physics that govern the regular play (that is, here on *Earth*) make this one of the few games that really feels like genuine pool, which is a big plus. But having to fight with the camera to get a decent view of a particularly tricky shot is the opposite of fun—especially when you're trying to make a shot close to the rail so that the butt end of your cue fills up 50 percent of your screen. (Though I do appreciate the nice touch of making the design on the end different every time.) The ability to buy helpful gadgets from the in-game store—like a laser pointer to line up your shots or a pair of magical goggles that show the likely path of all the balls—makes up for this a bit, however.

All that said, the bargain price makes this one of those situations in which the "bonus" content really does make a difference. If you've been on the fence about getting a pool game but haven't yet, you could do a lot worse. « *Joe Rybicki*



DID YOU KNOW?

The term "scratch" dates back to long ago, when people kept score of pool on a chalkboard. When a player pocketed the cue ball, a point was "scratched" off the shooter's score by his opponent.

PlayStation RATING

PROS Solid physics for the central game, lots and lots of bonus content, dirt cheap
CONS It's hard to get a good read on a shot, all that extraneous stuff can get annoying

Pub. Ignition **Dev.** Awesome **ESRB** Everyone **MSRP** $19.99

[● ● ● ○ ○]

SHOWDOWN LEGENDS OF WRESTLING

A DOUBLE DISQUALIFICATION

It's funny—Acclaim makes a big deal out of switching developers for *Showdown: Legends of Wrestling* because it's a so-called sign that it believes in the franchise and wants to make it better. But guess what? *Showdown* is just as bad as its two predecessors in almost every way.

Well, that's not entirely true—the graphics engine has improved. Character models still have a weird semideformed look, but they're otherwise much more realistic. And *Showdown* deserves credit for closely nailing the actual scale between wrestlers—Andre the Giant is taller than just about anyone in the game. But the animation is still horrendous. All the incredibly stiff movement in many cases just is not synced properly. A wrestler may execute an animation for a pile driver while his opponent stands five feet away.

The awesomeness doesn't stop there! Acclaim has changed the counter system, so you can press a button before any attack to counter it. Initially, you might think it's better than the previous system, which was dependent on timing, but **the new method makes it difficult to get offense going** in multiplayer—both players can sit there and press the counter button all day.

Then there's the commentary, which, like most commentary in wrestling games, sucks. The three commentators constantly repeat themselves, and their audio levels are inconsistent. Tony Schiavone typically says things at a normal audio level, but Bobby Heenan's comments often sound muted.

It's all a horrible mess, and it's too bad because it's still a good concept. All these great wrestlers in one game along with all of the well-known wrestling arenas (like Madison Square Garden and the SkyDome) is great, but it can't make up for poor wrestling mechanics. « *Giancarlo Varanini*

PlayStation RATING

PROS A huge roster of classic wrestlers, better graphics than previous games
CONS Poor animation, flawed counter system, bad audio, etc., etc., etc.

Pub. Acclaim **Dev.** Acclaim **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $49.99

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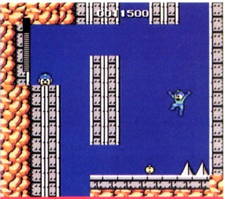


MEGA MAN ANNIVERSARY COLLECTION

A MEGA COLLECTION INDEED

Mega Man! Mega Man! Does whatever a...Mega...can. OK, maybe not, but if you're a fan of the little blue guy with the can-do attitude, then this collection of 10 games will make you break out into horrible renditions of superhero songs, too.

Mega Man Anniversary Collection gathers all of the Blue Bomber's great (and sometimes not-so-great) adventures into one tidy package. (Don't go looking for Mega Man X, though—he's technically a different character.) It even includes the NES iterations of *Mega Man*, and they're essentially perfect ports, complete with flickering and some occasional slowdown. Normally, that's not a good thing, but these annoyances had an important role in the original versions—to the point that if they weren't there, your timing for jumps and other precise actions would be all sorts of messed up.

Still, ***Mega Man* fans may find that there's something a little off about the games** because of the PS2 controller—it's certainly no NES or Super NES pad. So, veterans will have to take a little time to adjust, while newcomers will be able to jump right in without even noticing such problems.

Those same newcomers probably won't take as much enjoyment out of the collection, though. Some of the *Mega Man* games (namely *2*, *3*, *7*, and *8*) have held up well over the years, but the others...well, they haven't aged quite as gracefully. Plus, truth be told, each of the nonarcade games (*The Power Battle* and *The Power Fighters* come home for the first time) is essentially the same in terms of structure. But, hey, it's *Mega Man*—I don't think I'd want it any other way. « *Giancarlo Varanini*

PlayStation RATING

PROS It's *Mega Man* plain and simple, fans will love the collection and the extras, includes two arcade games never released on consoles
CONS Some games haven't aged well

Pub. Capcom **Dev.** Capcom **ESRB** Everyone **MSRP** $29.99

[●●●◐○]

COMBAT ELITE WWII PARATROOPERS

BALDUR'S NORRATH WITH NAZIS

The concept of stapling World War II aesthetics onto *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance*'s gameplay sounds zestily good on paper. However, with *Combat Elite: WWII Paratroopers*, the RPG has been streamlined to the point where it's no longer an action-RPG with Nazis—it's just a Nazi game with sparse RPG traits.

You start out as just another face in either the 101st or 82nd Airborne or the 1st British Paratrooper division (your choice is purely cosmetic and does not affect the gameplay) before moving on to hush-hush missions for the OSS. Along the way, you blow things up, reinforce entrenched troops, steal secret documents, and cause all-around mayhem.

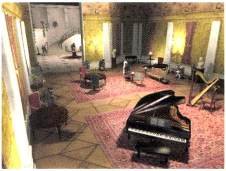
Combat Elite's main problem is it's neither a pure action game nor an RPG. The result: a diluted action-RPG. The RPG elements are barely there (the skill tree is more like a skill stump), and the too-slow action only occasionally picks up the pace. But overall, too many gaps of walking around, bumping into invisible walls, and looking for enemies exist. It's disappointing to recall that *Baldur's Gate* and *Champions of Norrath* have lots of skills and feats while *Combat Elite* has only nine—with six of them being merely "additional damage" and/or "range to selected weapon" type ones. The only cool skill is maximizing your combat sense, which results in you gaining some form of preternatural awareness that lets you instantly target enemies who target you.

Not all is lost. The single-player campaign takes up a decent chunk of time—it starts on D-Day and goes all the way into the summer of '45, through picturesque wrecked towns and snowy mountains. Some decent first-person sequences involve sniper rifles and bazookas, and it's still pretty fun just to shoot Nazis. You get a whole lotta guns to end people with, and when they're not stupidly staying put or getting shot at, the squad A.I. is competent.

However, instead of a rip-roaring action-RPG set in the most vivid conflict in history, we end up getting a doddering program that isn't very good in either regard. « *Thierry Nguyen*

WWII QUOTATION GOODNESS

Lady: Winston, you are drunk.
Churchill: And madam, you are ugly, but in the morning I shall be sober.



PlayStation RATING

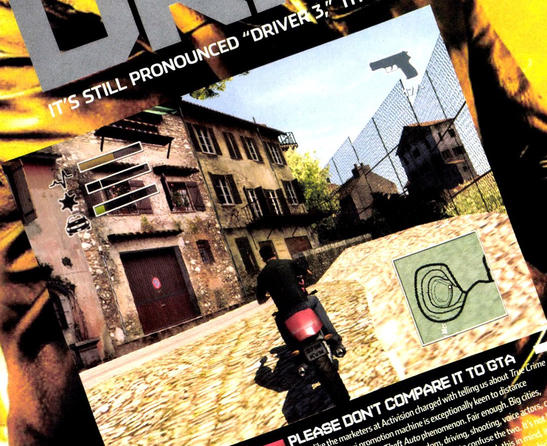
PROS It's always fun to shoot Nazis, and the scenery looks nice
CONS Not enough action or role-playing
FAVORITE COMBAT ELITE British Special Air Service, with a shout-out to Delta Force

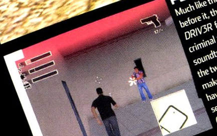
Pub. Acclaim **Dev.** BattleBorne Ent. **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $39.99

[●●●○○]

DRIV3R

IT'S STILL PRONOUNCED "DRIVER 3," THOUGH





PLEASE DON'T COMPARE IT TO GTA

Much like the marketers at Activision charged with telling us about *True Crime* before it, the Atari promotion machine is exceptionally keen to distance *DRIV3R* from the Grand Theft Auto phenomenon. Fair enough. Big cities, criminal activities, a modicum of freedom, driving, shooting, voice actors, cool soundtrack...I can see why you wouldn't want to confuse the two. It's not like the two franchises have any *similarities* or anything. With this in mind, it does make you wonder why Reflections chose to include a minigame in which you have to defeat 10 "Timmy Vermicellis" to unlock goodies. Timmy, as you can see, even looks like Tommy from Vice City. If you don't want us to think about GTA while playing *DRIV3R*, why would you do that?

Atari is keen to assert that the split between driving and on-foot action in *DRIV3R* is approximately 80/20. This sounds perfectly acceptable in theory, but in practice, it is the central downfall of the entire game. The 20 percent that takes place on foot takes four times longer than it should because of countless design flaws. In brief: The driving parts are awesome, the running around sucks.

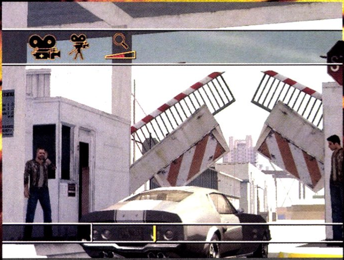
When I say that it sucks, I don't just mean that it's inferior compared with the car handling (which is just as fabulous as it was in the last two games)—I mean it really, really sucks. Hard. There are moments when you're struggling through what should be a relatively simple on-foot section and the rage will boil up inside you in a way that it probably hasn't for years. It's not that it's hard—it's that the design is incompetent. Controlling Tanner is unnecessarily difficult, the logic of the missions is badly communicated, the A.I. comes packed with problems, and let's face it—**the game has some technology issues.**

You want examples? A shootout in a boatyard sees the bad guys blindly running into your gunfire before you jump into a boat to chase after a midlevel thug in a powerboat. As with previous *Drivers*, if you lag behind, you lose the bad guy and have to restart the level. Keep up with him, and you eventually find yourself chasing him into a shack out in the water. As he moors his boat, he miraculously disappears to do whatever it is the game script has him doing next. As you pull up next to his boat, you turn to try to get out, but the lousy animation system won't let you get out. So you jump the other way into the water and swim to a handy ladder. Pressing the button to pull yourself up and out of the drink, you suddenly find yourself teleported back into the boat for no apparent reason. Meanwhile, the bad guys are filling you with lead.

There are ways to avoid this problem, but you soon learn that to play *DRIV3R* is to face its quirks and bugs as much as it is to engage in the gameplay. Often, you'll beat a mission only because you've learned to understand the dumb stuff that the scripting forces upon you. **You'll rarely beat a level the first time through,** and not because it's tough. The problem is that you're forced into a perpetual sequence of trial and error that never lets up throughout the entire story mode.

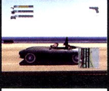
Toward the end of the game, you follow your nemesis, Jericho, into a building where he's cutting some kind of sinister deal. The plan is to sneak up on him and find out what he's up to without letting his goons see you. If you mess up once, he runs out to his car with his driver, and they hurtle away. As any modern gamer would try at this point, you'll attempt to limit his options. Instead of going into the building, you find his car and shoot at it until it explodes, and then you attempt the mission a little more recklessly. As soon as you're seen, the script sends Jericho out to his car—which is now miraculously in one piece again.

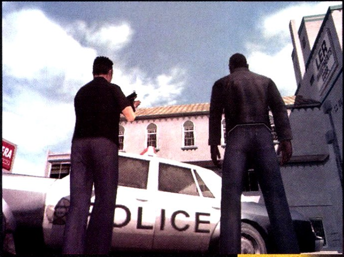
You see, you only ever have the *illusion* of freedom in *DRIV3R*. Sometimes missions allow you to make your own rules, but often



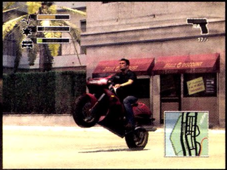
MAKING DRIVER MOVIES

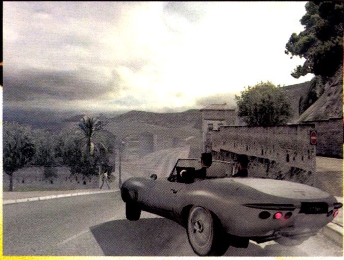
The moviemaking mode is in danger of being Reflections' most predictable trick. It started in the original *Driver* and has appeared in every game since, including *Stuntman*, which was pretty much built around the idea. *DRIV3R* expands on it a little and allows you to add effects such as motion blur. Crank that up too far, though, and it'll make you feel queasy. Piecing together beautifully directed car chases can be quite time-consuming but is ultimately a lot more rewarding than you might think. The interface is particularly easy to use, and a whole movie rarely requires more than 100K of memory card space, so you can crank out quite a few on a single card.



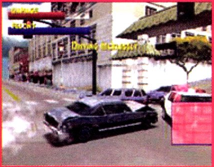


DRIVING IS GOOD
All the best bits of the game take place inside the cars. The on-foot stuff all pretty much sucks.



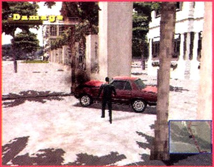


WE PLAYED THEM FOR YOU



DRIVER

Undercover cop Tanner pitched his services as a driver-for-hire in order to infiltrate a powerful crime ring spanning four of the nation's largest cities: New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Miami. *Driver* featured lots of driving and no tedious running around shooting at stuff. It was one of the first games to make use of a physics engine for realistic bouncing around, and Reflections' then-recent stint producing *Destruction Derby* games for Psygnosis meant that the crashes were particularly spectacular. It was a *very* ambitious game, and it even featured the replay director mode still present in the franchise today. It still stands as one of the great PlayStation games of all time.



DRIVER 2

Someone decided the franchise needed more of a story, so this time Tanner is up against crime lord Solomon Caine (who gets popped off at the beginning of *DRIV3R* by Mickey Rourke's character) and his bookkeeper, Pink Lenny. Caine had cut a deal with his rival, Brazilian gangster Alvaro Vasquez, but this prompted a gang war across two continents. Gameplay took Tanner to Vegas, Rio, Chicago, and Havana, and it was in *Driver 2* that we first met his partner Tobias Jones, who is voiced by Ving Rhames in *DRIV3R*. This game also took Tanner out of his car and introduced us to Reflections' complete lack of skill in producing gameplay that doesn't involve driving something.

you are very sharply reigned back in by the linear nature of the design and the flaws that this causes.

What I've mentioned so far, of course, assumes that you'll want to play through the "undercover" (story) mode of the game. After spending a great deal of time with the whole package, I'm here to tell you that you might not want to do that. Yes, you have to endure it to some degree in order to open up all of the game's other features, but once those options are there, take them. The story is bad. It's bloated, badly planned, misdirected, terribly scripted, awfully paced, and ultimately forgettable. **Essentially it's inconsequential to the action,** and the performances of the voice actors are almost wholly without merit. Often, you don't know what's going on, nor do you care. Yes, the cut-scenes are lovely (although terribly serious and humorless), and the music is wonderful, but what's most important are the car chases.

When you're playing through the story, you'll find yourself wishing that you could just play the car chases and not have to bother with all that tedious mucking about on foot. What luck! Quit out of the story and jump into either the driving games mode or the take-a-ride mode, and you'll never have to leave the comfort of one of the game's 70 controllable vehicles again. This is why the score at the end of this review isn't as low as you would think, having read this far.

If you've played either of the previous games in the franchise, you'll be familiar with some of the options in these modes. There are tests of skill, such as driving through cone slaloms; a survival mode in which the cops go frickin' psycho on you; and multiple cat-and-mouse chase modes in which you're either the cat or the mouse. To enjoy these modes to the fullest, you have to play through the Miami and Nice missions of the story mode so that you open Istanbul. But if you don't really care whether Tanner kills Jericho at the end, I suggest you **reward yourself for enduring the torture and throw yourself into the take-a-ride mode,** in which you simply cruise around, smashing through scenery and stealing cars to your heart's content.

I was conflicted the entire time I played this game. It's desperately, desperately flawed, and if you aren't prepared to wring every last drop of gameplay out of the entire package, you're going to come away very disappointed. Much like with *True Crime*, though, part of the reward here is to make your own fun by ignoring the parameters set for you. Treat it as a gaming sandbox, and you may enjoy it. « *John Davison*

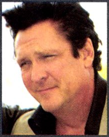
$30 MILLION BUYS YOU THIS

Four years of development time and about $30 million is what it took to bring a slightly misdirected action game to your PS2. By contrast, rumor has it that the budget for *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* is $20 million. Not that we're comparing the two.

THE STORY IS BAD. IT'S BLOATED, BADLY PLANNED, MISDIRECTED, TERRIBLY SCRIPTED, AWFULLY PACED, AND ULTIMATELY FORGETTABLE.

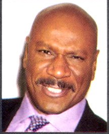
MEET THE "TALENT"

Everyone in *DRIV3R* is so damn serious. Makes you wonder why Atari paid the bucks for names you might recognize. Their performances are far from stellar.



TANNER
MICHAEL MADSEN

He doesn't say much, but what he does is spoken with the dulcet tones of Mr. Blonde, here exhibiting what would appear to be as little effort as humanly possible in order to receive his paycheck.



TOBIAS JONES
VING RHAMES

Your partner, your buddy. We spent the entire game listening for the dial tone, as he seems to be phoning this one in. His *Operation Surma* performance was Oscar-worthy compared to this.

CALITA
MICHELLE RODRIGUEZ

If Michelle Rodriguez called you on the phone right now, would you recognize her from the sound of her voice? No? Neither would we. She plays the head of South Beach, a notorious Miami gang.

JERICHO
MICKEY ROURKE

The big bad guy. He doesn't say much, but what he does comes from the pipes of a man who sounds a bit like he gargled with razor blades before stepping into the sound booth.

OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE RATING

PROS Excellent car handling, awesome car chases, detailed environments, wonderful production values

CONS Appalling on-foot gameplay, flawed missions, ghastly story

Pub. Atari **Dev.** Reflections **ESRB** Mature **MSRP** $49.99

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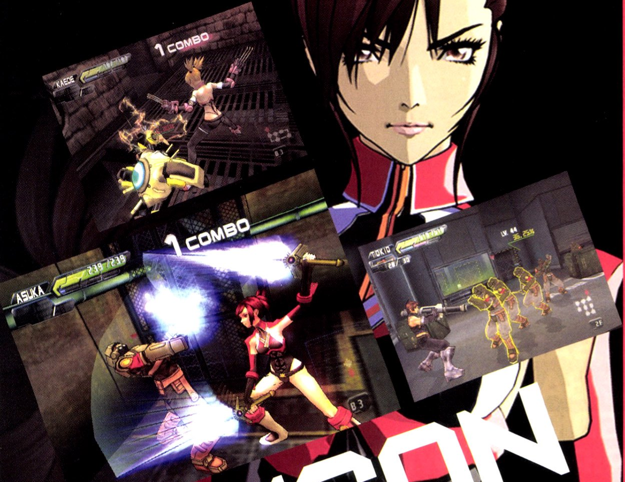

CRIMSON TEARS

DON'T YOU CRY TONIGHT

A side effect of so many publishers adding things like character development into their games has caused the press to bust out with terrible puns like "ArrrPG" (to describe Sid Meier's *Pirates* remake) and "CarPG" (for games like *R4* and *Pro Race Driver*). Alas, I'll have to continue the trend by calling *Crimson Tears* a "BrawlPG."

Crimson Tears' weird premise involves hunting down biomechanical terrors in dimensional mazes hidden in the deepest depths of the local sewer system. It makes very little sense but is conducive to the premise of "repeatedly teleport into dungeons to kill things, get loot and experience points, upgrade character attributes, buy new items, and kill things faster." Between dungeon romps, you can purchase items from various shops, improve your characters and their weapons, and even use enemy drops as components for improving their weapons. Heck, you can even donate money to the town magistrate to help renovate, which results in a better selection within the shops. The dungeons generate randomly each time, and besides your main quest of tracking down all the escaped creatures, townsfolk might send you on occasional side quests. There's the extra touch of having one of the three characters knocked out in a dungeon and using another character to rescue him or her for extra XP.

***Crimson Tears* has an excellent foundation** that, through tweaking, could easily help it become a franchise. The melding of fighting-game mechanics and RPG dungeon crawling is an inherently good one. The smooth controls combined with the well-designed cel-shaded characters results in fast-paced visceral combat. It's cool to just kick your way past some guys, but it's downright thrilling to string together something like a 21-hit combo with dual photon swords through an entire room of baddies.

Alas, *Crimson Tears'* lack of superslick loot and drops makes the dungeons all the more repetitive. Games like *Diablo* hide the fact that you're playing a bunch of similar-looking enemies in forgettable environments by just inundating you with tons of "phat loot," so to speak. *Crimson Tears* is a lot stingier, offering an occasional health item or random weapon component. It takes several tries to get the right mix of weapon components, and then it almost becomes tiring. Also, there are many times you'll have to gain lots of experience points before fighting a boss, which starts to make leveling up a bit less fun and more of a grind.

If *Crimson Tears* did a better job of eliminating or even just disguising its leveling grind, **it could have started a BrawlPG trend.** For now, it's merely good but repetitive—it could have leveled up more before its release. « *Thierry Nguyen*

THESE KIDS ARE ALL RIGHT

The three playable characters are dual-sword-wielding, pantless Amber; underage Kadie, brandishing the oversized Buster Sword; and one single dude named Tokio. They actually do play quite differently than each other, and it's unwise to just use one for the entire game, as you might have to rescue that character—it would suck to take an undeveloped character as your savior. Amber is the default hero and the only one who can use two swords at once. Kadie is potentially the strongest, able to use the biggest weapons, but she can't defend worth a damn. Tokio, being the token guy, excels at shooting things.

OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE RATING

PROS Good mix of fighting, RPG elements, and cel-shading
CONS Leveling up in dungeons can get way too repetitive

Pub. Capcom **Dev.** Dream Factory **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $39.99

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